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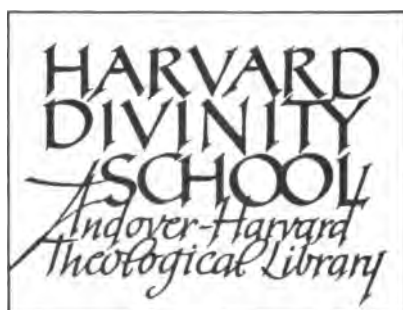
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J. H. ALLEN,
AMERICAN CHURCH HISTORY *Cambridge, Mass.*

AN HISTORICAL SKETCH
OF THE
UNITARIAN MOVEMENT
SINCE THE REFORMATION

BY

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PREFACE.

THE task attempted here is, first, to give, within the limits assigned, a history of the religious movement known as "Unitarian" sufficiently broad and complete for the general reader; and second, to furnish a list of authorities adequate for the uses of the special student. The latter object, it is hoped, has been effected by ample references in the margin. A formal bibliography, particularly of individual lives, which are very numerous, might be extended to any length, and might hardly justify the space it would require. Besides, the value of this sketch, such as it is, depends—in the latter part especially—on its being a record of personal recollections, judgments, or impressions, left by near sixty years during which I have been a student or observer, and more than fifty while I have been, in a way, a laborer, in this field. In what is said of the incidents and actors since the movement of thought among us commonly dated between 1835 and 1840, every name is one I recall, gratefully, as that of a teacher, associate, or friend. Most of these are passed away. Of the living, only Furness and Martineau have been included; and these, in their advanced and venerated old age, already belong to history.

ted, from my own point of view, by a study, written out during the time of my Harvard Divinity School, and published "Our Liberal Movement in Theology" (Brothers). In this connection special mention should be called to Dr. G. E. Ellis's "Half-Century of Channing, Parker, and Gannett," (Boston, 1857), and to John Weiss, O. B. Frothingham, and

For the remoter period I would especially mention Professor Bonet-Maury's "Early Sources" and to articles in the "Theological Repository," "Encyclopædia Britannica," by Rev. J. H. Allen.

J. H. ALLEN.

Y, 1894.

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THE UNITARIANS.

CHAPTER I.

ITALIAN REFORMERS.

UNITARIANISM as now held is a late growth out of the general movement of thought that brought about the Protestant Reformation and has been working out ever since. It is wholly independent of the controversies or the heresies which appeared during the long process that developed the creed of Catholic Christendom. These may be regarded as having come to an end with the recantation of the Adoptian theory by Felix of Urgel in Catalonia in 799. The Reformers of the sixteenth century came slowly and reluctantly into conflict with the dogmatic system which for more than a thousand years had been accepted by the general consent of Christians. "We have no difference with Rome on a single point of doctrine," said Melancthon at Augsburg, in 1530.¹ Though they had assailed the logical method of the Scholastics and avoided their doctrinal terms and distinctions as long as they could, yet, when they came to the formal defense of their own theology, they adopted and eagerly maintained (against Servetus, for example) the very forms and phrases invented

¹ *Dogma nullum habemus diversum ab ecclesiâ romanâ.*—"Opera," ed. Bretschneider, vol. ii., p. 170.

known in history as a distinct religious
more than seven hundred years, suffer-
these years under a persecution whose
cannot be paralleled elsewhere in relig-
the slightest approach to submission
eir own tradition connects their seces-
th the zeal of Claudius (*Claude*), the
Turin, a Spaniard by birth, a pupil of
aced in the see of Piedmont by Louis
o, to contend there against supersti-
showed such iconoclastic vigor as to
res of the church, and to win the ill
Baronius, *Anno* 825, lviii.)

dius may be taken as the connecting
and modern forms of Unitarian belief.
ible that this earliest protest against

Empire Church may have left a line
ered among the southern valleys of the
ne part of the celebrated "Leonine"
ick to the days of Constantine, assert-
ding to Paul" that maintained itself
f the hierarchy, and emerged in the
ght promoted by the Crusades, when

Whiggery and Walden

policy of persecution in the Third Lateran Council of 1179, and later to the twenty years' religious war in Languedoc—appears, when we look into it, to have turned on points that came to have a sinister prominence in the story of the Protestant Reformation, and are, in fact, nearly connected with our present topic. The heresies of that day are stigmatized both as "Arian"¹ and as "Manichæan"—which latter reproach they share with Calvinism. But, in particular, they are agreed in rejecting the church dogma of baptismal regeneration. Their religious life takes the form sometimes of a ritual severely simple, sometimes of a morality at once tender and austere, sometimes of an exaltation running to Antinomian excess, sometimes of a pious mysticism that merges all positive dogma in living experiences of the soul.

It is perhaps with a little surprise that we find in these medieval heresies a family likeness connecting them with certain radical sects that sprang up side by side with the Lutheran reform, especially the "Anabaptists"—that is, re-baptizers, requiring the rite of all new converts. These have left an ill name by reason of the scandals and ferocities which some of them ran into. But, again, we meet them from time to time living peaceably and piously, as in Poland, in recognized religious communities; or as extending widely in some Lutheran countries, especially in northern Germany. Their church life, so far as we discern it, shows nothing of disorder, but only a greater independence of tradition and dogma than that of other Protestant sects.

The germs of modern Unitarianism as a popular belief we seem to find first in these poor communities of Baptists, scattered and scorned. It was, as we shall see, part of the

¹ "In this year [1176] was condemned the Arian heresy, which had infected almost the entire province of Toulouse."—Baronius. (See a debate on the Trinity in Mansi, vol. xxii., p. 79.)

attempt of the younger Socinus to strengthen them by a closer-knit organization and a more sharply defined belief. When some of them emigrated out of Holland into England in the reign of Henry VIII., and were burned alive for their "Arian" heresy in 1535, we come in this pitiful tragedy upon the first historic traces of what grew long after into the body of Unitarian Dissent.¹ Further, when the persecution was renewed against them ten years later, under the boy-king Edward, we find, as making part of the same account, in the burning of that poor pious enthusiast, Joan of Kent, what appears to have been a crude form of the old Apollinarian heresy—denial that the human body of the Lord Jesus was taken from the substance of his mother.

Again, the growth of the Unitarian opinion was favored by a general freedom of speculation which made the life of the "Humanist" revival. Erasmus, with elaborate sarcasm, had brought into contempt the very method and nomenclature of the Scholastic theology. Naturally, he is spoken of as "that cursed antitrinitarian" by the heresy-hunters of his day. Luther and Calvin, in their recoil from Catholic dogma, long avoided the term "trinity," and refused to employ the Athanasian Creed; though—the one from his ardent worship of the person of Jesus, and the other from the demand of an infinite sacrifice in the atonement—they abhorred whatever implied any limit to the absolute deity of Christ.² "Surely," writes Melanchthon, "there is no reason that we should spend much pains in these high matters—God, unity, trinity, the mystery of creation, or the mode of incarnation. What, pray, have

¹ Introduction to Wallace's "Antitrinitarian Biography."

² See the testimonies in Chastel, "Histoire du Christianisme," vol. iv., pp. 380, 381. The Genevan pastors in 1537 were (he says) charged by Caroli with Arianism and Sabellianism. Compare Calvin, "Opera," vol. ix., p. 693.

the Scholastic theologues gained in all these centuries by their handling of such themes? I might easily overturn all the arguments they allege: how many of these, indeed, seem to make rather for heresy than for the Catholic doctrine! Did Paul philosophize on the mystery of the trinity, or the mode of incarnation, or active or passive creation?"¹ It was natural that he too should be charged (as we are told he was) with Arianism, a heresy he was afterward so diligent to refute. Zwingli at Marburg, in 1529, had first of all (says D'Aubigné) to deny humanitarian ("Jewish") views of the nature of Christ. And ten years later, Melancthon warns the Venetian Senate of the wide spread of "Servetianism" in northern Italy, employing against it the same metaphysical arguments and distinctions he had once disclaimed.

But here we touch upon another, if not quite independent, train of antecedents. The starting-point is not, as before, in the protest of the German Reformers, and not in the bosom of a secluded, obscure, and fanatical sect. It is at the very heart of the Catholic Church itself, in the interior circles of its purest piety and its most refined intelligence. The movement we are concerned with embraces minds that never once thought of secession from the Church of Rome; they might even hope that Rome would yet join hands with Germany to bring about a genuine reform of Christendom. They announce no formal scheme of doctrine and make no open attack on the existing church system; their hostility is shown simply by their silence as to the ritual, the discipline, or the dogma which that system makes all-important in the religious life. The movement they represent begins with a very pure and ardent form of practical piety, though it runs out presently to a phase of opinion more frankly radical and rationalistic than we find

¹ "Loci Theologici," pp. 8, 9 (ed. of 1521).

r Charles V. came into Italy out of
 tend the splendid ceremonial of his
 a² he brought with him as members
 o twin brothers, Alphonso and John
 le Spanish house, both accomplished
 ardent piety. The elder was the em-
 tary, the one employed by him when
 mplishment was called for; he was a
 dent of Erasmus, whom he had de-
 with ecclesiastical assailants, and who
 eral letters of warm affection: "a man
 Erasmus," said his friends. He had
 ialogues, been the champion of Charles
 ed for his antipapal policy. Charles
 ere not (as he is better known in his-
 n soured, sallow, and prematurely old,
 id by the crown, worn out with care,
 ntment; not as the baffled politician,

authorities for this very interesting chapter of the
 "Gli Eretici d'Italia" (3 vols. Turin, 1867);
 Italy" (2 vols., London, 1827); Young's "Life
 ding several elaborate special biographies (London,
 "Origines du Christianisme Unitaire chez les An-
 1882. with Preface by Dr. Martineau).

weary and sick with warring against the stars in their courses through a period of forty years; but as a man of fresh vigor, five years younger than the young German emperor is to-day (1893), with the splendid possibilities before him of a reign that should reconstruct the Holy, Roman Empire and reunite the divided church—now angry at the obstinate opposition of the Reformers, and again accepting their alliance against Pope or Turk, but always the object of jealous pride and devotion to his Spanish countrymen. Such was the young hero whom the brothers Valdes now attended.

Of the two dialogues, the earlier—between Mercury and Charon at the River Styx—passes in review the procession of shades that had gone to the world below in the late war with France, expatiating freely on the sins of ambition, wrath, and lust that went into that conflict, and no way sparing the vices of the church. The other, in still bolder strain, opens with a meeting of two friends, an officer near the court and a churchman fresh from the war in Italy: it gives, with a deep vein of passion, the most vivid picture we have of the horrors in the sack of Rome (1527), casting the whole guilt of the miseries of Italy upon the worldly ambition of pope, cardinal, and priest. These daring compositions, in the favorite literary form of the day, had stirred the papal envoy in Spain to bitter recrimination. No man, under protection less powerful than the emperor's own arm, was safe from the sleepless enmity of the Spanish Inquisition. Charles could not desert the young friends who volunteered this bold and timely defense; and the brothers, both of whom had a hand in it, made (it is likely) part of the brilliant escort that sailed with him from Barcelona in September.¹

¹ The early history of the brothers Valdes was almost unknown till within the past few years; even the later biographers are confused in dates and quite

The career of Alphonso Valdes, whether as scholar, diplomat, or reformer (for he had been deeply impressed by the conferences with Melanchthon at Augsburg), was cut short by his death from plague at Vienna, in 1532. The same year Charles, now at Ratisbon, learned the sudden death of his viceroy at Naples, and appointed to that eminent post Don Pedro of Toledo, brother of the terrible Alva, who had something of the other's severity, but apparently not his implacable bigotry. With him was joined, as secretary, the younger Valdes, whose story we have next to follow. He was now not far from thirty-three—an accomplished man of letters, like his brother; a gentleman of infinite courtesy and sweetness, who seems to have produced on his friends an impression like that of Sir Philip Sidney at Elizabeth's court; a Christian of deep and serious piety, who had shared at Augsburg his brother's interest in the religious side of the Reformed doctrine. As a friend described him, on the news of his early death, he was "without doubt, in act, word, and counsel, a complete man; it was but a small portion of his spirit that sustained his frail and slender frame, while with the larger portion, and with pure intellect (as it were) apart from the body, he stood always uplifted to the contemplation of truth and divine things."¹

irreconcilable with one another. The historian must patch them together as best he can. To Cantù it is not quite clear, even, whether there were one or two. But a letter of Erasmus (Ep. xxii. 15) addressed to the younger speaks of him as, by report, his brother's very double in mind and person: *non duo gemelli, sed idem prorsus homo*. The embarkation at Barcelona is well employed by D'Aubigné to illustrate the Spaniards' enthusiastic loyalty to their Prince.

¹ Cantù, vol. i., p. 383. Erasmus, in a letter of March 20, 1529 (Ep. xix. 30), addresses him as if he were already escaped from Spain, which is "full of wasps' nests, yea, of furious hornets." Some accounts speak of him as having gone direct to Naples; others assert that he was at Rome in 1531, in official service with Clement VII.; others, again, that he did not reside at Naples till 1534, and then not in attendance on Don Pedro.

The line of division between the churches was still wavering and doubtful. Valdes, while he never ceased to be at heart a devout and faithful Catholic, soon set himself, without the prejudice there would have been a few years later, to propagate the purest doctrine of the Reformers as to what we should at this day call the method of the religious life. In this work he was aided by a fine scholarship, translating considerable portions of the Scriptures from the Hebrew as well as the Greek. He was favored, besides, by this happy circumstance: Naples was then under a rule more liberal, enlightened, and just than most countries at that time, as is shown by two striking evidences: there existed under its immediate jurisdiction in Calabria a prosperous community of the Waldenses, that had emigrated thither some two hundred years before, and subsisted there till it was exterminated with circumstances of peculiar horror in 1560; and when, in 1547, an attempt was made to force upon Naples the odious papal Inquisition, it was resisted by a storm of popular fury which (it is said) cut off to the last man a garrison of three thousand that tried to quiet the disorder. The freedom of thinking, the learning and culture, and seclusion from the sharp religious contentions of the day, made this the fair field where Valdes and his friends began a movement that at one time seemed likely to win Italy itself to the side of the Reformation, or at least to secure standing-ground for the completest religious liberty. The story of this movement remains the single record of his life till his death, in 1541, near the age of forty-five.

The gospel that lay at the heart of this movement was as absolutely free from dogma as it was then possible for such a thing to be. It is only in this sense that the claim sometimes made by Unitarians of the next generation—that Valdes was the real founder of their doctrine—can

have any ground in fact. The propagation of it is said to have begun in the palace of the lady Giulia Gonzaga—a young widow of strange and romantic history, one of the most beautiful, accomplished, and devout of the high-born ladies of Italy, to whom Valdes addressed in the form of dialogue (where her responses are given with much vivacity and point) an elementary manual of piety, “The Christian Alphabet,” the best known of his shorter writings.¹ The circle that had gathered first about this lovely witness of the new faith met for a series of years stately—a sort of religious club—in the residence of Valdes himself, where the long street Chiaja runs between the royal gardens and the margin of the bay. Here was found a remarkable group of those especially distinguished for rank, refinement, learning, eloquence, or piety. To such a select class alone, not directly to the people at large, the counsels or expositions of the young secretary were addressed. The propaganda included no such thing as public teaching or preaching: hence a certain aristocratic or academic quality, which at once deprived it of popular effect, and gave it a radical drift that quickly drew to it a perilous attention. Only when a genuine Christian scholar like Peter Martyr Vermigli, afterward installed by Cranmer as professor of theology at Oxford; or a great religious enthusiast like Bernard Ochino, the most eloquent preacher of his day, whose discourses were eagerly sought by several rival cities, and who was once deputed for a series of Lenten sermons at

¹ An English translation of this dialogue is bound up with Wiffen's biography of Valdes (much the best we have), and an interesting sketch of the life of his fair respondent (London, 1861). Beginning with the three rules of patience, obedience, and discipline, it traces twelve steps to the higher life. Some passages show a curiously close parallel with Tauler. St. Paul's “hay, straw, stubble” are explained as “vain devotions, with opinions and fancies of men.” (Vol. xv. of the writings of Valdes.)

Naples; or a deeply devout and retiring student like Marcantonio Flaminio, one of the reputed authors of "The Benefit of Christ"; or a churchman of singular breadth, integrity, and courage like Pietro Carnesecchi, who met a cruel death from the Inquisition in 1567—chanced to be drawn within the circle, he was sure to catch something from the refined and serious spirit that presided in it, and to carry the same spirit into pulpit or desk or printed discourse or priestly ministration. And, as the circle widened out, it came to include a well-defined school of religious thought, that marked out the lines of the short-lived Italian Reformation.

Little or no jealousy—at any rate, little or no active opposition—seems to have been aroused by the school of Valdes during his own lifetime. Within that space of perhaps eight years, it may be fairly said that this type of ardent but undogmatic piety, raying out from other centers as well as this, had taken possession of the highest intelligence and noblest life throughout Italy. Among those who came directly under the personal influence of Valdes or of his immediate disciples we find that illustrious lady Vittoria Colonna, a correspondent of Ochino, and a devout student of the new word, whose friendship with Michael Angelo (who addressed to her the lofty strain of his noble Sonnets) makes one of the finest and purest pages of Italian literary history; the lady Olimpia Morata, of wonderful genius and learning, an instructress in the court of Ferrara, a declared Protestant in belief, who with serene courage followed her husband (a young German physician) through years of bitter exile and died of the miseries of it; her deeply attached friend, the Duchess of Ferrara, Renée (*Renata*), daughter of Louis XII. and sister to the queen of France, who bravely and steadily befriended the Re-

formers for many years, till subdued by her husband's harshness and threats of the Inquisition;¹ the great scholar and professor of eloquence, Aonio Paleario, friend of Ochino, who taught with freedom and power in most of the chief towns of northern Italy, unconscious or disdainful of danger, till he was seized and after two years' imprisonment hanged and burned in Rome at the age of seventy; even Reginald Pole, a cardinal and a Plantagenet, cousin of the Tudors, a friend of the Reformers and advocate of some of their opinions, yet counseling them to keep their doctrine to themselves, and consenting weakly to the cruelties of Bloody Mary: "whether of good or bad faith in all this, God knows," says an Italian compiler of these times.²

The writings of Valdes include the counsels of personal piety already mentioned; a brief digest called "One Hundred and Ten Considerations," held to be his most characteristic exposition; and comments on several books of Scripture, of which those on the Psalms (*Saltario*), on "Matthew," and on "Romans" are best known. In general, these counsels and comments are purely those of practical and personal religion, extraordinarily free from any assumption or even hint of dogma. The one point of Christ's sacrifice is, indeed, incessantly urged, in the general sense of the Reformers, and with no reference whatever to the mystery in which it has been enveloped by the church; but, apart from this, there is little or nothing to suggest an opinion on any point in controversy. As to such, he is betrayed into no statement that may not be put in the very words of Scripture: this makes what is sometimes called "his private opinion on the Trinity." In the commentary on Matthew (for example), perhaps the most

¹ *Generosa d'animo, colta di spirito, gentile di modi, e oggetto d'ammirazione per quanti la circondarono.*

² "La Riforma in Italia nel Secolo xvi." (anon. Turin, 1856), p. 94.

extended and formal of all, he speaks of Christ as Son of God and *therefore* in his own nature divine; but uses not a single phrase which a Unitarian of the older school might not have written, or which a devout Trinitarian would not heartily accord with. The line that was presently to divide Protestant from Catholic so sharply is not (I think) so much as once hinted at in any of these writings, except by their absolute silence as to anything which the ecclesiastical system might prescribe.

The best known type of this religious movement is a small manual entitled "Benefit of Christ Crucified." This little book, which is the very mirror of the life here described, had so great currency in Italy that more than 40,000 copies are said to have been issued from the press of Venice alone; and it was so carefully suppressed that it was thought, till its rediscovery in 1855, to be (says Macaulay) "as hopelessly lost as the second decade of Livy."¹ It is the voice not so much of an individual, but rather of a school or company of associates; and it may well enough be held as the real legacy of Valdes to his own generation. To find the motive of its persistent suppression in later years, we have only to note its complete silence as to the doctrine or discipline which the papal church made all-essential; and refer to the time—some twenty years later than that we have been considering—when the most innocent-seeming symptom of a piety at variance with that church, or independent of it, was mercilessly hunted down and trampled out.

Into that cruelest of tragedies we need not enter here.

¹ Published in Venice, 1543; and, a copy having been found in the library at Cambridge, in London (1855), under the name of Paleario. It has been ascribed to Valdes himself, and to several of his circle—Benedetto of Mantua, Ochino, or Flaminio; but, from a sentence in one of Paleario's letters, it seems to be clearly his, and is generally so regarded.

It is enough to copy from this manual a few sentences which show the characteristic style of doctrine, clothing itself in the very thoughts and phrases dearest to the heart of the Reformation,—prefixing a statement (taken here from Cantù) of the doctrinal theory it rests on. We have in it a type of opinion which it will be important hereafter to bear in mind.

"Original sin" (it teaches) "was the cause of the ills we suffer, though we knew it not till the law was given. The first office of the law was to give us knowledge of sin; next, to enlarge its field by forbidding evil desire; third, to show the wrath of God toward those who do not observe the law; fourth, to inspire man with fear; fifth, to constrain him to turn to Christ, on whom alone depend the forgiveness of sin, justification, and all our [hope of] salvation. If the sin of Adam was alone enough, without our fault, to render us all sinners, *a fortiori* the obedience ("righteousness") of Christ will have power to render us all righteous and children of grace without our coöperation—which could not be virtue in us, unless we should ourselves become good first. God, having already punished all sin in his best-beloved Son, has granted to mankind universal pardon, which every believer in the gospel shares. From Christ alone, therefore, may each one know his own salvation, confiding not in his own works, but in him alone. This pious confidence enters into our heart by act of the Holy Spirit, communicated to us through faith; and faith comes never without the love of God. Hereby we feel ourselves moved with a glad and active (*operoso*) zeal to do good works; we feel the power to fulfill them, and to suffer all things for the love and glory of our merciful Father. . . . Wherefore," the manual goes on to say, "it may be clearly understood that the pious Christian need feel no doubt of the pardon of his sins, nor of the grace of God;

still, to satisfy the reader, I will write down some authorities of holy teachers which confirm this faith." Here he introduces very many names (presumably Catholic), and resumes: "Let no one, however, think—with those false Christians who customarily degrade [the things they handle]—that true faith consists in believing the history of Christ, as if we should believe that of Cæsar or Alexander, or as the Turks believe their Koran. Faith does not of itself, indeed, renew the heart, or warm it with the love of God, or bring forth good works and change of life: these things proceed alone from that true faith which is the work of God in us. Justifying faith is like flame, which cannot but yield light: thus it cannot burn sin away without the aid of good works. And as, seeing a flame that sheds no light, we know that it is false, and painted, so when in any one we see not the light of good works, we say he has not the true faith inspired by God." (Cantù, vol. ii, pp. 380, 381.)

This doctrine of "Works" contains, in fact, the key to that stage of the Reformation at which we are now arrived. As the historian calls us to note, it is as far from the daring Lutheran assertion of a faith wholly independent of works,¹ as from the formal Catholic pretension of works apart from faith. But it was the Catholic Church, not the Lutheran, that felt itself assailed. If not the righteousness it claimed to teach, at any rate the costly mechanism by which it sought to "transact the great business of salvation," was in danger of getting obsolete. In 1542, the year after Valdes died, the "Supreme and Universal Tribunal of

¹ "When Melancthon sought at Ratisbon, in 1541, to come to terms with the Catholics, saying that by justifying faith should be understood a faith that works by love, Luther declared that this was a pitiful makeshift, a new patch on an old garment, by which the rent is made worse."—Cantù, vol. i., p. 297.

Inquisition" was established at Rome. He, at least, had escaped the evil to come. In 1565 his dearest and first disciple, Giulia Gonzaga, was set free by a timely death from the summons of that terrible tribunal; letters from her, produced in the trial of Carnesecchi, had shown that there had been correspondence between them and Calvin at Geneva. The steps by which, within the next fifteen years, the germinating seeds of the Reform were stamped out in Italy, belong to a wider field than ours.¹ We have only to follow the fortunes of two or three, whose exile brought them within the lines of our story.

The most noted and conspicuous among them, of those who belonged to the immediate circle of Valdes, was the famous preacher Bernard (or Bernardino) Ochino. He was a native of Siena, born in 1487 (four years after Luther), and in his childhood must have known the fame, possibly heard the voice, of Savonarola. To that wonderful gift of an impassioned and popular eloquence Ochino was held to be the true successor. "He preaches," said Charles V., who heard him once in Naples, "with such spirit and devotion that he would make stones weep" (*farebbe piangere i sassi*). He emulated the great Dominican in austerity, joining first the strictest of the Franciscan order, the Cordeliers, and then the Capuchins, who for greater severity had seceded from them in 1525. At middle life he was the most renowned of preachers in all Italy. "I have opened my heart," wrote Cardinal Bembo, "to Ochino as to Christ himself; I have never seen a holier man." He was sent to officiate during one religious season (1538) in Naples, where he not only frequented the society of Valdes, but is said to have received from him topics, arguments, and hints to carry before the great crowds that

¹ The general story is well and briefly told by McCrie; individual details are more amply given in Young's "Life of Paleario."

heard him from the pulpit. Under these influences a new life opened before him. Without any thought of separating himself from the Roman Church, and while accepting the highest honors that could be given by the religious order he belonged to, he was among the foremost of those who sought a radical reformation of that church from within.

It chanced that, in 1542, one of his associates died suddenly, poisoned (it was said) by some ecclesiastic. A passionate appeal of Ochino at Venice against such methods of attack on the free conscience opened the eyes of the authorities. The tribunal of the Inquisition had been established at Rome on the 12th of July that very year, and he was summoned to give an account of himself before it. In his daring fashion he would have obeyed; but at Bologna he received a warning which led him to consult his friend Vermigli (Peter Martyr), then at Florence, who convinced him that silence or death was the choice he would have to make. In a pathetic letter to the lady Vittoria Colonna he justified the step he was about to take; and, aided by the noble Duchess of Ferrara, the two friends made their escape to Geneva in the month of August. His fall, said the implacable Cardinal Caraffa, afterward Paul IV., was like the fall of Lucifer, son of the morning.

At Geneva, and again at ^{Strasburg} Zurich and at Basel, Ochino became the pastor of congregations of Italian exiles, who had fled to the shelter generously opened to them by the four reforming cantons. At Strasburg, where was a Protestant theological college of note, the services of Vermigli, most accomplished and eminent of teachers, were employed in instruction; and here, a little later, Ochino joined him as preacher to the congregation. We find, indeed, that the restless and erratic temper of the emotional orator

was greatly steadied and balanced all along by the calmer judgment and larger intelligence of his companion. While the two friends were here together, in the first days of young King Edward in England, Archbishop Cranmer, then looking abroad for what might confirm and illustrate the new reign of Protestantism, invited them both to posts of dignity and service there—wishing too, no doubt, to advance the principles of the Reformation somewhat further than had been suffered under the imperious Henry, who piqued himself on a “Catholic” orthodoxy all his own. Vermigli was appointed professor of theology at Oxford, and Ochino as a canon of Canterbury, with liberty to reside in London. In 1550, under the general direction of a liberal-minded Polish noble, John Laski, was established “the Strangers’ Church,” holding by royal grant an ancient estate of the Augustinian friars, Ochino being special pastor of the Italians. This Strangers’ Church, with its eleven affiliated provincial congregations, became the nursery of a religious life that ripened afterward into various forms of free speculation and dissent; and it is held, in particular, to have been the real fountain-head of English Unitarianism.¹ It represented at this time a population of Protestant refugees, chiefly from the Netherlands, which has been estimated to number more than five thousand.²

And here a strange episode occurs, throwing a vivid side-light on the temper of theological discussion in that day. At the accession of Queen Mary, in 1553, foreign Protestants living in England were naturally quick to avail themselves of the days of grace allowed them, to seek ref-

¹ Professor Bonet-Maury notes that Norwich, the seat of one of the affiliated churches, was the English home of the Huguenot family of Martineau.

² When it was restored under Elizabeth, in 1560, it was put under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of London; and such shelter as it might give to foreign heresy was denied to Englishmen in 1573.

uge again upon the Continent. But at home it came to pass that the most orthodox of Anglicans, Cranmer at their head, were put under the same condemnation and cast into the same prisons with the most obnoxious of heretics. These latter caught at their chance, and were eager to convert their fellow-prisoners; so that presently those places of confinement became scenes of acrimonious dispute. "Some rejected the divinity of Christ, others his humanity. Some believed in the impersonality of the Holy Spirit; or, admitting that the Holy Spirit was a person, denied his supreme godhead. Some, again, called in question the truth of the doctrine of original sin, election and predestination, justification by faith, and Christ's descent into hell. Some denied the validity of infant baptism, and some condemned the use of things indifferent in religion." If it is interesting to find all these diversities of modern creeds contending with one another and with that established by law, in the prisons of Bloody Mary, still more curious will be a glance at the temper of these disputes, as we find it shown in a tract of Archdeacon Philpot of Winchester, himself one of the martyrs of that day, written to justify the insult he had put upon a fellow-prisoner.¹ It is entitled "An Apology of Jhon Philpot; Written for spyttyng on an Arian: With an Invective against the Arians, the veri naturall Children of Anti-christ." The following abridged extract will suffice:

"I am amased, and do tremble both in body and sowle, to heare at this day certen men, or rather not men, but covered with man's shape, parsons of a bestly understanding, who, after so many and manifest benefyts and graces of oure Lorde God and Saviour Jesus Christ,—and declared to be both God and man by the spirit of sanctifica-

¹ Copied by Wallace (vol. i., p. 23 *et seq.*) from Strype's "Ecclesiastical Memoirs," vol. iii., pt. 2, p. 363.

tion, the eternal Søn of God with power,—notwithstanding are not ashamed to robbe this eternal Son of God, and owr most marcifful Saviour, and to pluck hym out of the glorious throne of his unspeakable Deity. O infidelity, more terrible than the palpable darknes of Egipt! O flaming fyerbronnnes of hell!—What harte may bare such blasphemy? What eye may quietly behold such an enemy of God? What membre of Christ may allowe, yn any wyse, such a membre of the Divel? . . . What faithful servant can be content to heare his master blasphemed? And if perchance he shew any just anger therfore, all honest men do beare with his doying in that behalf: and cannot you, Christian bretherne and sisterne, beare with me, who, for the just zeale of the glory of my God and Christ, beyng blasphemed by an arrogant, ignorant, and obstinately blinded Arian, making hymself equal with Christ, saying, that God was none otherwyse in Christ, than God was in hym; making hym but a creature, as he was hymself, [pretending] you to be without synne as well as Christ, did spyt on hym?"

And any day, as he well knew, the archdeacon was liable to be burned at the same stake with his Arian fellow-misbeliever.

From their ^{nearly six} three years' stay in England, Vermigli and Ochino returned to Switzerland. They lived mostly at Zurich, where their lives ran, in general, peaceably together, the stronger exercising (it would seem) a wholesome restraint upon the more emotional temper of the other. For Ochino's only creed, it has been said, was "universal love and one universal church"—surely the most generous of gospels. But this religion of pure sentiment has its risks; and these are apt to be at their worst when the sentimentalist is turned of sixty. Ochino did not quite escape the penalties of so loose a creed, in the

loss of public confidence. It would perhaps have been better for his peace if he had kept true to his monastic vow. But, marrying late in life, in a strange country, and in poverty, he found himself in old age a widower, burdened with the charge, for which he was peculiarly unfit, of children who died before his eyes in his last and painfulest exile.¹

We find, too, a lack of dignity and self-respect in his impulsive expressions of opinion. When in Poland, in 1559, he had joined "at a private conference" the anti-trinitarian party, even then under some legal disability, although he never frankly declared himself Unitarian in belief. Various writings of his—including a dialogue on the Real Presence and a little treatise on Purgatory—are still to be found in libraries, testifying to his restless habit of drawing everything into public question. In 1563, the year after Vermigli's death, he filled the sum of his offenses by printing at Basel, in two small volumes, whose thin disguise was easily seen through, thirty dialogues, on almost every topic held in controversy at that day. The dialogue form gives a dangerous freedom of speculation, which in general he did not abuse: the worst that could be charged was that, like Abelard's "Yes and No," it is a cover for secret skepticism. A brief treatise on Freewill, fitly enough called "Labyrinths," showing all the difficulties of the question and offering no solution, well shows this quality of his mind.

Most of these discussions are upon the common ground of theology or ethics. But the argument on the Trinity,

¹ His wife was a worker in linen (*lingère*) whom he had brought with him out of Italy, probably one of his humbler disciples, whom (it is likely) he married to avoid scandal, as well as to give her a safe and respectable position. She was killed by a fall downstairs, which led Theodore Beza to refer, brutally, to the divine judgment on Ochino's heresy.

and that on the lawfulness of polygamy, proved his ruin. In the former the difficulties of the doctrine are put forward with emphasis and vigor, while its defense (which the writer seems to claim for his own position) looked to unfriendly eyes intentionally weak. The other gave still deeper offense, since the flagrant case of Philip of Hesse had made the topic of polygamy a tender one for Protestants to handle. All the respectability of Zurich was outraged. The dialogue was translated out of its classic Latin into broad German, and was laid before the magistrates. Ochino's justification of himself was considered to be evasive and weak, if not insulting to his judges. He was ordered to leave the city. It was midwinter, and he besought that in mercy he might be allowed to wait till spring. But the very terms in which he urged his plea were interpreted as a fresh affront. And so, at the age of seventy-six, he set forth with his four boys to find shelter in Basel, in Augsburg, in Schaffhausen, and finally under the bleak sky of Poland.

Even this poor refuge was denied him by an edict—issued by King Sigismund under pressure from Cardinal Borromeo—that warned away all assailants of the Trinity, and he found his last retreat in still ruder Moravia. "I must obey the magistrate," he said to friends who urged him to appeal and wait, "even if I should be torn by famished wolves." His boys had died of plague in Poland, before his eyes; and the end came to him a little later, when nearly seventy-eight, early in January, 1565. In pity of these sorrows one might almost pardon the strange arrogance of his self-assertion once in Cracow: "Think not that you are come hither to-day to see any other than a true apostle of Christ. For the name and glory of Christ, and to make clear the truth of heavenly things, I have suffered far more than any man or any apostle, be he who

he may, has suffered for the faith. Nor, if the gift of miracles has not been granted to me as to them, should you have faith in me less than in them, since we teach the same things received from the same God; and it is a miracle great enough, to have suffered what we suffer."¹

We have seen in several of the extracts given above how intense a conviction of the absolute divinity and supreme sovereignty of Christ had been fostered under the ecclesiastical discipline of the thousand years that went before the great conflict of the Reformation; so that it is no wonder that any question of that conviction should have been held by most of the Reformers themselves as a sort of treason to their rightful King. In fact, the first developed form of Unitarian opinion—that for which Servetus suffered at Geneva in 1553—held that “the whole nature and essence of God is in Christ,” as at once the revealed God of the Old Testament and the Divine Word of the New; in whom, most literally, “dwelt the fullness of the Godhead bodily”; who is, to us, the only Deity we can truly worship, since to us the Eternal Source of Being is necessarily and forever unknown. The deeply instructive and tragic story of this next development of opinion will make the topic of the succeeding chapter.

¹ Cantù, vol. ii., p. 63.

CHAPTER II.

SERVETUS.

THE name of Servetus is to most persons best known, perhaps only known, by the ghastly martyrdom he underwent at Geneva. But from our present point of view it has a far higher interest and value; for he was the first to attempt that still unfinished task of modern criticism, to interpret the Christian doctrine direct from the Bible text, and that alone, discarding all the established creeds and all ecclesiastical tradition. Thus a somewhat full study of him is essential to the purpose we have in hand; for, though far from being a Unitarian by any modern standard of belief, his life marks a very critical point in the movement which Unitarianism represents. His attempt shows faults of the man and faults of the time—arrogance of temper, excess of self-confidence, haste, disdain of his antagonists, and total ignorance of much that the critic of our day must take for granted. But, with whatever defect in knowledge or temper, it was intelligent, bold, self-consistent, made with absolute conviction of being right; and so, not at all unworthy to be the pioneer in its own line of advance.

We do not find it easy to understand the motive which made the death of Servetus appear at the time a necessary and even meritorious act; still less, the eager assent with which the leading Reformers, almost without exception, triumphed in it. Calvin was not alone party to it. Servetus was, in the strictest sense, a victim to the general

opinion. He escaped from the fire of the Roman Inquisition only to perish more cruelly in the flame kindled by Protestant intolerance, in the very month that saw Mary Tudor seated on the throne of England. It will be convenient to copy here the words in which Calvin introduces him to us in the first sentences of his "Refutation": "As in our time God has bestowed upon the world this singular grace, to bring back to life the pure doctrine of the gospel, which had so long been buried, so in our own knowledge the devil has used his customary craft to darken this light, raising up many fantastical spirits which have sown the seeds of various errors, as of Anabaptists, Freethinkers, and the like. But among the rest has been a certain Spaniard, Michael Servetus by name, who has heaped up a confused mass of lawless dreams, such that his impiety surpasses all the mischief which others have contrived to do. Though I plainly saw that his poison was more deadly, still it did not seem to me expedient to apply the remedy direct, and contend against his errors of set purpose, seeing that their absurdity was so gross, that I might hope they would soon vanish of themselves in smoke, without any man's opposing them."¹ This "Refutation," signed by fourteen others of the Protestant leaders, in which it is argued that heretics must be put down by the sword, was published a little less than six months after the burning of Servetus. In reply to it Melancthon wrote: "I have read your brilliant refutation of his horrible blasphemies. I thank the Son of God, who has given you the prize of victory. The church now and

¹ Works, vol. viii., p. 457. The English Puritan, John Owen, says of Servetus a century later (1655): "He is the only person in the world, that I ever read or heard of, that ever died upon the account of religion, in reference to whom the zeal of them that put him to death may be acquitted."—"Vindiciæ Evangelicæ."

hereafter owes and will owe to you her gratitude. I assent absolutely to your judgment. I assert that your magistrates have done right in putting the blasphemer to death by the regular forms of justice." And three years later he wrote, "It is a pious and memorable example to all posterity."¹

What was the career, and what was the theological offense, that called down this all but universal execration?

Michael Servetus was a gentleman's son of Aragon (probably), born it is uncertain whether in 1509 or 1511, his testimony on his two trials making the year doubtful: we may here assume the earlier. For twenty years of his life, during his residence in France, he was known only as *Michel de Villeneuve* (Michael of Villanueva), from the name of his birthtown. Of very precocious intelligence, he received his early instruction at the regular convent school, and then (it is supposed) at Saragossa. Somewhere about the age of sixteen, electing law instead of the ecclesiastical career he had been intended for, he was sent to the celebrated college at Toulouse. Here the traditions seem to have been grave, almost monastic, with some vivid memories of the old Albigensian persecution: thus we read of "the iron cage suspended from a beam above the river, for ducking heretics until they died"; and of "the religious processions that filed incessantly through the streets."² Under these influences the attraction of law gave way to the keener fascination of theology. The Lutheran writings had at this time considerable circulation in Spain and in the south of France; and we hear of a treatise on "Rational Theology" by Raymond de Sabunda, making Nature as well as Scripture one way of ascent to divine knowledge, which is commonly supposed

¹ Works, vol. ix., p. 131.

² Cited in R. Willis's "Servetus and Calvin," p. 12.

to have influenced the young student's course. He says himself that he learned some things from Erasmus. As early as sixteen, or thereabout, he must have been an eager student of the Bible, bringing to it at least a fair elementary knowledge of Hebrew as well as Greek, with an extraordinarily vigorous and independent mind of his own. A genius for religion as well as a genius for conquest, we are told, was the haughty claim of his countrymen in those days. Spaniards were "the knights of faith."

In particular, Servetus is held to have been influenced by a small treatise of Melanchthon, called "Theological Topics" (*Loci Theologici*), which was then the universally accepted text-book of the Reformed theology. This was first published in 1521 (the year that Luther appeared at Worms), when its writer was only twenty-four years old, and was at once received with extraordinary favor. "That little book," said Luther, "contains more solid doctrine than any other since the days of the apostles."¹ Its frank protest against the logical method of the schools was sure to attract the student, eager for novelty, and encourage him to bolder steps. There might be prejudice against Luther, who had headed a revolt dangerous to state as well as to church; but the young, eloquent scholar, associated almost from boyhood with the studies of Reuchlin and Erasmus, those famous men of letters, was sure of a more friendly hearing. His words almost certainly confirmed the purpose to which Servetus held with singular tenacity

¹ A "centennial" edition, a page-for-page and word-for-word copy of the first, was published at Leipzig in 1821, giving with it certain fundamental changes in later editions. Those of 1535, 1543, and 1559 show a widening departure from the original point of view—the discussions at Augsburg, with the bolder criticism of Servetus, having forced attention to the metaphysical grounds of the doctrine then deemed orthodox. The passages cited below (p. 31) are copied from the Leipzig edition.

3 year at Augsburg. . . .
ly to be trusted by the emperor in con-
g of the immense authority conferred on

He was, besides, a man of open mind
er, put for the occasion in place of one
severe, who was dispatched on a compli-
to Rome. Approaching with slow and
ference likely to decide his whole future
: Reformers, Charles found it essential to
moderate in his dealing with them; and
ies of his confessor were what he needed.
9, they had signed the celebrated Protest
s enacted by the diet there, and by that
be known under the formidable name
This attitude of theirs was menacing,
were by the high national spirit of the
princes. But they had not yet learned to
eror's good faith. Above all, they knew
ance was of value to him, flanked as he
ility of France and the Turk. They put
nthon, accordingly, as their champion like-

eloquently said by Tollin in his most instructive book,
Servet," without, however, citing any external evidence
Servetus nowhere, except in a final appeal to Melancthon

liest to keep the peace, detaining Luther at the safe distance of Coburg, a hundred and twenty miles away.

In the very critical negotiations at Augsburg, lasting nearly six months (from early in April, 1530), Melancthon appeared more than once to go dangerously beyond his instructions on the way toward Rome, and had to be held sharply in hand by Luther and the secular princes. Holding that there was no doctrinal point of difference at stake, he was led to accept, one after another, positions of the Scholastic theology which he found essential to his own argument on matters of faith, particularly the Trinity; and of these positions we shall find that he has a disturbing consciousness when he comes to face the criticisms of Servetus. But with the Catholic party the question narrowed down to the very practical one touching the efficacy of sacraments, authority of the priesthood, and the value of "works" as essential to salvation. Once on this ground, compromise was plainly not to be thought of. "Salvation by faith"—not "works"—was the one thing at issue. The conferences came to an end with the rejection of the Protestants' "Apology" on the 22d of September. The Reformation itself was saved, under a "Confession" that still left it something substantial to contend for.

As confidential attendant upon Quintana, Servetus was himself, if not a member of the emperor's household, at least very close to it. He was thus likely to be witness to some of the more private discussions, and may even have come to know more than one of the leading Reformers in person—nay, have visited Luther (as is possible) so far away as Coburg. This critical time of the Reformation was a critical moment in his own career. He had already been sharply offended by the ostentatious despotism of the hierarchy. He was now brought face to face at once with the strength and weakness of the Reformers. His own

scheme of reconstruction was taking shape in his thought. Personal independence might seem all that was needed to complete it. Suddenly, without either quarrel or explanation that we know, he left the service of Quintana and retired to Switzerland, the common refuge of freethinkers. We find him presently at Basel, in lively dispute with Œcolampadius, who urges against him, "You do not admit, then, that the Son of God was to be a man, but [hold] that a man was to be the Son of God;" and bids him "confess the Son consubstantial and coeternal with God, that we may hold you to be a Christian."¹ In his reply Servetus seems to dread some restraint, and begs that he may not be hindered from putting forth in France certain "books" which he has ready against the fair at Lyons.

This means, no doubt, the first literary work of Servetus, "De Trinitatis Erroribus" ("Errors Implied in the Trinity"). It appears in a neat volume of about two hundred pages, handsomely printed at Hagenau, near Strassburg, without name of publisher or place of publication, but with the writer's name in full: *per Michaellem Serveto alias Revès*,² under the date 1531.³ The disputes with Œcolampadius had probably made Servetus eager, and his publisher reluctant, to incur the risk. It was followed the next year by two dialogues on the Trinity, in which the argument is expanded and reinforced, and four brief essays—on Justification, Christ's Kingdom, Law and Gospel, and Charity—all bound up with it. A second edition, nearly facsimile, was published after his death in Holland.

Before we consider the substance of the book, it is well

¹ Calvin, Works, vol. viii., p. 861; also, touching Zwingli, p. 744.

² Conjecturally, his mother's family name.

³ A very handsome copy was kindly put at my service by Rev. S. M. Jackson, secretary of the Society of Church History. A manuscript copy is in the Harvard University library.

to recall for a moment the argument and style of Melanchthon's "Topics," which made, in a sense, the immediate occasion of it. The motive with Melanchthon, as we have seen, is almost purely practical and undogmatic. Speculations on the metaphysical grounds or reasons of a trinity he seems wholly to disown. "To know Christ," he says, "is to know his works (*beneficia*); not, as the dogmatists teach, to gaze upon the mode of incarnation. . . . It is Christian knowledge to know what the law requires; whence you are to obtain power to fulfill the law, or pardon for transgression; how the afflicted conscience may be comforted" (p. 9). "The Holy Spirit is nothing else than the living will and act of God; when, therefore, we are new-born of the Spirit, which is the living will of God, we already of ourselves do that very thing which the law commands" (p. 128). He thus discards the theory of *hypostasis*, or quasi-personality, the ground (as commonly held) of the church doctrine of the Trinity. The very term *hypostasis*, which figures largely in his later discussion of the subject, appears only once in all this essay, and is there very inadequately rendered "*expectation* of things hoped for" (Heb. xi. 1). This rendering, further, betrays the weakest point in Melanchthon's view, making the Christian salvation a matter of promise only, not of present fulfillment; against which Servetus, with strong emphasis, urges the assurance of present salvation—as an earnest of that hereafter—in the sense of Paul, and of all in every time who have best understood the mind of Paul. Again, in exposition of the Divine Word: "The Son is called *image*, or *word*; he is thus an image or likeness begotten by the thought of God"—further explained by saying that, while our thoughts are but evanescent acts, into which we do not convey our being, the thought of God is "an image of himself, not evanescent, but subsisting by the

communication to it of his own being" (p. 250). This might, indeed, be taken as a noble, poetic way of defining every act of immediate creation; but when, instead, it only asserts the exceptional generation of one Divine Person in the image of the Father, it becomes a phrase of arbitrary dogmatics, opening an easy way to more rationalizing speculation, which Servetus takes prompt advantage of.

Turning back now to his essay, we are struck first of all by the wonderful self-assertion of this youth of two-and-twenty—what some have called the haughty temper of the Spaniard—that shows in it. Servetus never appears in the attitude of the modest learner; not even as a sober reasoner, ready to meet an opponent on equal terms in courteous debate. He is always self-confident, ardent, aggressive. In stating his point he takes a tone of superiority, almost of condescension, and demands rather than invites assent. His argument is oftenest pure assertion; often, again, it is (as in speaking of moral freedom and the value of right conduct) plain good sense, cutting through the subtleties of formal theology in a fashion his opponents were no way prepared for. Perhaps they found it hardest of all to understand his plea (p. 78), "All my philosophy and all my science I find in the Bible."

It is to be observed of his argument, that he nowhere attacks the Trinity or the deity of Christ,—which indeed in his own fashion he explicitly asserts,—but only attempts to show how those most orthodox of terms are to be understood. The opening paragraph is as follows: "In exploring the holy mysteries of the Divine Triad I have held that one should begin with the Man; for I see that many, having not the foundation of Christ, in their flight of speculation on the Word ascribe little or nothing to the Man, and even give the true Christ completely over to oblivion. These I will take care to remind who this Christ really is.

Further, what and how much is to be ascribed to Christ, the church shall judge. Since the [masculine] pronoun shows that what they call 'the Humanity' is *a man*, I will assume these three points: 1. This [man] is Jesus Christ; 2. He is the Son of God; 3. He is God" (p. 1). And again: "What is reflected [of Deity] in the Word is *Christ himself*: as, if I hold a mirror, you may see me both face to face and in the mirror, but it is only one person that you see; . . . in such a mirror God willed and ordained that he should himself be seen" (pp. 94, 108). "The Word, when God utters it, is *God himself speaking*; and since the Word was made man, we understand by it Christ himself, who is the Word of God" (p. 48). "Christ is himself the face [that is, the visible aspect, *facies*] of the Father. There is no other Person of God but Christ; there is no other *hypostasis* of God but he; the entire godhead of the Father is in him" (p. 112). "God in himself cannot be conceived in thought. He is known not in his nature, but in manifestation (*specie*); not by nature, but by grace" (p. 12). All theories of the Divine nature, apart from the Word, are "blasphemies against Christ" (p. 103). "The only Trinity is a trinity of manifestations or modes of action, not of persons; and, as Tertullian teaches, that trinity will cease in the eternal world" (p. 82). "There is no Spirit, properly so called, outside of man. Stephen saw in vision both God and Christ, but no third Person; 'Angels behold the face of your Father,' not of a Trinity" (p. 30).

A few examples may be added, to illustrate the pungent and epigrammatic turn of phrase: "Of Christ's kingdom the door is Faith, the inner court is Eternal Life, and all the way between is Love." Of the dogmatists, "All seem to me to have part truth, part error; and every one looks down on his neighbor's error, but sees not his own."

"More faith is to be given to one truth confessed by an enemy, than to a thousand falsehoods of our friends." "The church may remain, and yet not remain the church of God" (p. 43). "Faith is the *substance* of things hoped for; but not the Lutheran faith" (p. 96); that is, a present salvation, not a mere promise or "shadow of things to come." And, touching predestination, "There is no past or future with God" (p. 81).

Such a challenge as this was sure to command attention. Melanchthon, in particular, found himself compelled to reconsider his earlier positions. For a time he seems to hesitate. "You ask," he writes to a friend in February, 1533, "what I think of Servetus. I see that he is keen and adroit in disputation; but, frankly, I do not allow him weight. He has, I think, confused fancies and notions not well shaped out upon the things he treats. As to Justification, he is clearly wild; *about the Triad*, you know I have always feared those [disputes] would break out some time. Good God! what tragedies will this question stir among our successors: *if the Logos is an hypostasis, if the Spirit is an hypostasis!* I turn to those words of Scripture which bid us call upon Christ: this is to render him Divine honor, and is full of consolation. *But to seek out anxiously the notions and differences of hypostases is no great profit.*"¹

This letter of Melanchthon has been called "the parting of the ways." So far, it might seem possible that the current of doctrinal opinion among the Reformers should be turned into a broader channel, and that he had it in his power to say the decisive word. He is just now giving

¹ The italics here represent the Greek phrases which Melanchthon is fond of using: the term *triad* is less compromising than *trinity*. "Where he agrees with Rome," says Tollin, "he talks church Latin; where he differs, the language of the New Testament" (p. 84).

serious study to Servetus: *Servetum multum lego*; but with less and less of favor. In a little more than a month his course is clear; "he has decided to retract," and to reconstruct his theology (as we have seen) on the ancient lines. He approaches Rome by accepting the Scholastic doctrine of the Trinity and the church doctrine of Works—influenced, perhaps, by memories of the radical outbreak of 1525 in Germany, and of the pressure brought to bear at Augsburg.¹ A few years later (1539), he writes to put the authorities of Venice on their guard against the dangerous spread of the "Servetian heresy" in northern Italy. "Spain," said Zanchi, "produced the hen, Italy has hatched the eggs, and now we see the chicks beginning to peep!"

Meanwhile Servetus has vanished out of sight, and the name is unheard among men till he reappears, twenty years later, at his fatal trial in Geneva. Still in early youth, less than twenty-four years old at most, he did not care to face the storm he had raised. His reform might wait, and there was enough else he had to learn and do. Those twenty years he spent in France, as *Michel de Villeneuve*. For some years he is a student in Paris, learning anatomy with Vesalius, lecturing on astronomy and physical geography, disputing on theology with Calvin, even practicing judicial astrology, which brings him into trouble, and obliges him to seek another place and occupation. During some part of these years he has found employment with a publisher, Trechsel, in Lyons; and of his labors at this time we have an interesting proof in a handsome folio, a Latin translation of the geographer Ptolemy, adorned with rude cuts and some fifty ruder maps, published in 1535.² The curious reader finds in this volume a paragraph on Palestine, which was brought up against Servetus in Geneva, eighteen years

¹ What the alternative might have been is eloquently put by Tollin (p. 133).

² This edition is in the Harvard University library.

later, as a fling in the face of Scripture: "Still you must know, kind reader, that such excellence has been unjustly or in pure boasting ascribed to this land, seeing that the experience itself of merchants and travelers avows it to be rude, sterile, and lacking every charm. This Promised Land you may call, indeed, a land of promise; but not (as we should say) a land to praise."¹

Now it happened that while lecturing in Paris Servetus had gained the friendship of a young ecclesiastic, Pierre Paumier, who was in course of time promoted to be Archbishop of Vienne, on the Rhone, twenty miles south of Lyons. He now, hearing of his old friend as a physician practicing in Charlieu, not far off, persuaded him to remove to that city, giving him a home under his own protection in the precincts of his palace. For twelve years Servetus here led a life comparatively prosperous and at ease, with widening reputation as a practitioner and a man of letters. His most important work during this time was to revise and superintend the printing of a very elegant Latin Bible—Pagnini's version, first printed fourteen years before.² The new work appeared in 1542. In this Servetus took another dangerous step in his chosen career of independent critic and expositor. He was, perhaps, the first who introduced historical criticism into the systematic study and interpretation of the Bible; and he did it, naturally, in a way to bring him into trouble afterward. Thus, in commenting on the Hebrew prophets, he takes the bold ground of asserting that all their predictions, rightly understood, deal with events and persons of their own time; and this method he carries out, in his own positive fashion, in the case of

¹ The reading and construction are here a little doubtful.

² For an account of this extremely rare edition, see Le Long's "*Bibliotheca Sacra*," vol. iv., pp. 473, 477, and in Pettigrew's "*Bibliotheca Sussexiana*," vol. ii., pp. 388, 408; compare Calvin, *Works*, vol. viii., p. 497. Presumably, no copy of it exists in this country.

those prophecies which have been and still are most confidently held to foretell explicitly the distant reign of the Messiah. He makes terms with current opinion, it is true: "the sublimity and truth of these words belong to Christ alone," whose passion they foretell; but the "natural sense" comes first. Catholic and Protestant were scandalized alike. It may be true that Servetus only anticipates a method that has since justified his bold sagacity in many cases; but in the eyes of his contemporaries all the great strains of prophecy seemed to be profaned by mere audacious guess-work. The pierced hands and feet are those of David, in flight among the thorny hills; the gall and vinegar given him to drink point at the churlish inhospitality of Nabal; the promised Child, the Wonderful, the Prince of Peace, only anticipates the glories of Hezekiah's reign; and, worst of all, the Man of Sorrows, on whom "the Lord hath laid the iniquity of us all," is King Cyrus, in the sharp conflict through which he fought his way to victory!¹ To the mind of that day all this seemed, and it was, a gratuitous offense. To us the interest is rather in the premature attempt at a natural interpretation; still more (it may be) in the hint it gives of a restless, vain, and reckless temper in the man.

This task, it is likely, was what drew Servetus back into the circle of irresistible attraction toward his earlier studies. In 1546, four years after Pagnini's Bible appeared, he had completed the draft of his one elaborated and independent work, that which he gave the best labor of his life to finish, and which in the finishing exacted the forfeit of his life. This work is his "Christianity Restored"² (*Christianismi Restitutio*). It is, as we have it now, in size a thick 12mo

¹ These examples are taken from Willis's "Servetus and Calvin."

² Better, perhaps, "Reconstruction of Christendom" (or, "Christ's True Kingdom"), as suggested by the Rev. Alexander Gordon.

(strictly, a small 8vo) of 734 pages. In substance it is made up of three parts: a Recast, much modified and expanded, of his early critique on the Trinity, in seven books; a series of Essays, in seven books, on special topics—faith and justice of Christ's kingdom, regeneration, the Lord's Supper, the reign of Antichrist—some of these being treated with great vigor, power, and indignant eloquence; and a Sequel, of thirty letters written to Calvin in the correspondence that now followed, closing with an "Apology" addressed to Melancthon. Servetus was now, at the age of thirty-seven, fully equipped, as he felt, to claim and hold his own place among the reformers of the church. He would measure himself, first, with those who seemed to be pillars of the Reformation; and so, in an evil hour, he sent a copy of his manuscript draft to Calvin in confidence (*sub sigillo secreti*), soliciting any comment he might wish to make.

The fortunes of the book, as we shall see, were as strange, almost as tragic, as those of the writer. Calvin never returned the manuscript, which was long after hunted up and used in evidence at the trial of Servetus. Instead of comment he sent a copy of his own "Institutes,"¹ with the remark that he had no time for discussion: his opinion, he said, would be found recorded there. To his friend Farel he wrote: "Servetus has sent me a big volume of his own ravings, with the swagger of a bully (*thrasonice*), saying that I shall find wonderful and unheard-of things in it. If I will consent, he proposes to come here. But I will not pledge him my word; for if he should come, only let my authority prevail, *I will never let him go away alive.*"²

¹ Servetus's title is a manifest parallel, or travesty, of Calvin's "Christianismi Institutio."

² To Farel, February, 1546. He writes in nearly the same terms to Viret (cited in evidence in the case of Bolsec).

Servetus, with like amenity, sent back his copy of the "Institutio" with abundant comments in his own style written on the margin. "There is hardly a page," writes Calvin in his acrid phrase, "that is not defiled by his vomit."

The "Restitutio" went slowly through the press at Vienne, under its author's supervision, at a small printing-office in an obscure quarter of the town. This was not, apparently, from any dread of publicity on his own part; possibly on the printer's account, whom he did his best to screen upon his trial. But, to give the book its best effect, its publication was held in reserve as a surprise upon the public. Early in the fatal year 1553 a thousand copies were made up in two great bales of five hundred each, one being intended for the Easter fair at Frankfort, and the other for distribution nearer home. With superfluous courtesy, or (as he would call it) effrontery, an advance copy was sent to Calvin. That copy is one of the three (or four, the number stated by Professor Schaff) of the original issue now known to exist; it was used in evidence at the trial of Servetus in Geneva, and is now in the great library at Paris, blackened by time and scrawled over with notes of the prosecuting counsel. A second found its way through many hands to Transylvania, and at length, for safe-keeping, to the imperial library at Vienna. A third, "the most valuable of all, containing the original *Proæmium*, with pathetic autobiographical touches," belongs to the University of Edinburgh.¹

Servetus, as we must remember, was not yet known by his true name in France. The only indications of it in the volume are in the Hebrew text on the title-page, "At that

¹ See note to an article by the Rev. A. Gordon in the "Theological Review" for 1878, p. 412. An edition corresponding with this page for page was printed in 1790.

time shall Michael the prince stand up" (Dan. xii. 1.);¹ the occurrence of the full name as that of a person in the dialogue (p. 199); and the initials M. S. V. at the end of the book. These were not needed for identification, but were enough for evidence. Calvin at once, through a correspondence at second-hand which he would afterward have gladly disowned, put the Catholic authorities in Lyons upon the track of the heretic sheltered at Vienne in the archbishop's own palace.² So promptly was this done, that the bale of books lying there was seized, unopened, and within a few days Servetus was a prisoner of the Inquisition. His arrest was procured by one of the basest tricks even of the inquisitorial police—sending for him to visit a sick patient, and waylaying him upon this errand of mercy.

He was speedily tried, and condemned of heresy. But, while waiting sentence, he quietly walked out of the prison gate at four o'clock one fine morning, availing himself of certain liberties allowed him—expressly, it would seem, to invite his escape, since his medical skill had made him friends among the officials. For four months he was now lost to view. His effigy was burned in all due form. The bale of his books was consumed in the same pile. The Protestant authorities at Frankfort were warned meanwhile, and the copies sent there were also destroyed.

For four months, then, Servetus wandered up and down

¹ An allusion not only to his own name, but to the approaching reign of the saints (Rev. xii. 7), which he eagerly predicted.

² The part taken in this by Calvin is doubtful. He himself says, "There is nothing in it," which Rilliet thinks conclusive. The letters were written by a friend of his, De Tric, and at his instigation, perhaps dictation, as shown by Dr. Willis to be almost certain. The second letter is particularly damaging, as it shows that, to make the evidence conclusive, Calvin forwarded to Vienne private communications in Servetus's handwriting, which he had requested to have returned, but which were treacherously used against him.

in France, barred from Spain by the Inquisition, and vainly seeking a way of escape to Naples. On the 12th of August, on a Saturday night, he appeared at a little inn in Geneva, meaning to seek a boat and cross the lake next morning. But the strict Genevan Sabbath forced him to wait. An improbable account even has it, that he had lain hid there nearly a month, seeking to find friends, or make them, among the enemies of Calvin; since this was a critical year in the town politics, and the contention was sharp between the "patriots" who made the civil, and the "strangers" who made the religious, aristocracy. On Sunday, the 13th, attending with characteristic rashness at the afternoon service, he was recognized, and before night he was lodged in jail.

Of the tedious trial that followed the record is given in minute detail, impossible to copy here.¹ Two or three points, however, we need to bear in mind. Calvin, while he urged the prosecution and did all he could to bring it to a fatal issue, appears only once in the course of the trial, at the end of the preliminary four days' examination (August 14th-17th), which was to prove the *fact of heresy*. After this, the trial was purely a criminal process before the Lesser Council, a secular tribunal of twenty-five members, all laymen, to determine the guilt and penalty of the *propagation of heresy*, as a crime against the public peace.²

¹ It has been very clearly summarized by Albert Rilliet, in a small volume, of which a translation appeared in Edinburgh in 1846. A briefer and probably fairer account is given by Saisset in the "Revue des deux Mondes," 1848, vol. i., p. 585.

² The items of the charge are: "1. That for twenty-four years he has disturbed the peace of the churches; 2. That he has printed an execrable book (the "De Erroribus"); 3. That he has not ceased to scatter the poison of his heresy; 4. That he has printed a second book (the "Restitutio"); 5. That he has broken out from lawful imprisonment."—Calvin's Works, vol. viii., pp. 727-731. The tribunal at Vienne had found him guilty of "scandalous heresy, dogmatizing, fabrication of new doctrines and heretical books, sedi-

Again, this latter stage of the process, occupying two months, shows three distinct periods, or phases. In the first (August 21st–24th), Servetus, who has been thoroughly cowed by the ferocity of the attack or else exhausted by the debates, is submissive and humble, standing only on his defense. In the second, he takes heart from the attitude of the Council (which has just nullified a decree of excommunication pronounced by Calvin and his clergy against Berthelier, leader of the hostile party), and is so far emboldened as to make a formal countercharge against Calvin, demanding that he be put on trial instead, under the same risks and penalties, including forfeiture of goods to him, Servetus. This stage continues till near the end of September (August 23d–September 22d). Meanwhile, it is resolved (contrary to the advice of Calvin) to ask advice of the four leading Swiss Protestant churches,—in Basel, Zurich, Berne, and Schaffhausen,—a course that occupies four weeks, and still further encourages the accused. His fate really turned on the answers from these churches; and, foreseeing this, Calvin took due measures to forewarn them. In each case the reply was to the same effect: all confided in the wisdom of the Genevan Council *to put a stop to heresy*, while none hinted at the means. Rejecting Calvin's plea that execution should be "by the sword," the Council ordained death by fire, so conforming to the old imperial law.¹

The sentence was drawn out at great length on the 26th of October. Servetus did not know it till the next day, Friday, two hours before the execution, when for a moment he was completely broken down, as Calvin tauntingly re-

tion, disturbance of public order and peace, rebellion, disobedience to ordinances against heresy, and breaking out of the royal prison."

¹ Established by the emperor Frederick II. in 1243 (Mansi, vol. xxiii., p. 589: *ut vivi in conspectu hominum comburantur*).

ports. On a rising ground near the lake, a little eastward from the city, he was chained to a stake; and (the account in "Sandius"¹ says) for more than two hours, while stifling in the fumes of straw and brimstone, suffered the torture of a fire of "green oak fagots with the leaves still on," the wind blowing the flame so that it would only scorch, not kill, till the crowd, in horror, heaped the fuel closer. His last cry was, "Jesus, Son of the Eternal God, have mercy on me!" Farel's retort was, "Call rather on the Eternal Son of God!" "I know well that for this thing I must die," Servetus had written not long before; "but not for that does my heart fail me, that I may be a disciple like the Master."²

To modern feeling this "ferocious pedantry," as Saisset calls it, seems as idle as it was merciless. But in truth, the entire process of thought for which Servetus suffered is contained in it. If we look through the whole long record of his cross-questioning, or the longer controversy that went before, we find in it the one position on which he never varies. He will never admit the transcendental fiction of *hypostases*, or quasi-personalities, to represent the agency of the Eternal Word or the Holy Spirit in man's redemption. In this one thing he departs furthest from the thought of his own day, and approaches nearest to ours. His theology is, in the strictest meaning of the term, "Christocentric." As Tollin phrases it, "From first to last he asserts Jesus Christ—the personal, historic, individual man—to be God throughout (*durch und durch*), and always holds fast to that belief." It is Scriptural, in the sense that every point of it rests on the exactest exposition

¹ Supposed to have come from Socinus through his grandson Andreas Wiszowaty (*Wissowatius*).

² The words were copied by Saisset from the Latin in Servetus's handwriting.

of the Bible phrase, by a rule of interpretation he has honestly adopted, in full accord with Melanchthon's earliest and most widely accepted work.

If now, upon a general view, we try to see what was the actual contribution Servetus made to the religious thought of his day, we shall find it to be something like the following. First is his rejection of the purely metaphysical or scholastic Trinity, with his supreme exaltation of Christ, in which he approaches much more nearly the "new orthodoxy" than either the Unitarian criticism or the philosophic rationalism of our day. Next in importance is his vigorous assertion of a *present salvation* through Christ, as opposed to the formal and feeble "expectancy" into which the living gospel of the New Testament had been dwarfed by Melanchthon; together with the vindication of that gospel from the restraint of the Mosaic Law. Next is his repudiation of infant baptism, which he attacks with a scornful vehemence quite unintelligible to us, till we see how to his mind it carried with it the theory of sacramental efficacy that made the evil power of sacerdotalism, under the assumption of a birth-curse, to be removed only by magic spells or "sorcery." It is in this connection that he calls Calvin "a thief and a robber," as bringing souls into the fold "not through the Door, but by another way"; and recommends to him the following prayer: "Most merciful Jesus, Son of God, who with such token of love didst take little children in thine arms and bless them: bless now, and by the hand of thy power guide, these little ones, that by faith in thee they may be sharers of thy heavenly kingdom. O most gentle Jesus, Son of God, who from birth wast wholly free from guilt, grant that without guile we may abide in the simplicity of these infants, that the kingdom of heaven, which thou hast de-

clared to belong to such, may so by thy favor be kept for us; and by thy boundless mercy may they, made humble in spirit, be gathered into it!" (Ep. xvi.) Surely, these are not the words of one who, as has been said, in rejecting the baptism of infants, left them to eternal death!

Regarding the nature of absolute Deity, we have seen that Servetus holds it to be, in the phrase of our day, "unknowable." His opinion on that matter is interpreted as "the higher pantheism" of the Neo-Platonists, of Spinoza, Schleiermacher, and Emerson. His later language on matters of religious speculation is increasingly mystical, as it has been with very many of native religious genius, and as it notably was with St. Augustine. In constructing a rational Christianity, however, whose mysteries are developed from the data of metaphysics, he is the forerunner not of the modern mystics, but (says Saisset) of the philosophical schools of Kant, Schelling, Hegel, and Schleiermacher.¹

In respect to the ultimate destiny of man, Servetus implies, if he does not positively assert, a universal redemption through purgatorial flame, purifying, not avenging. "Place, time, and motion shall cease when sky and earth are passed away; after the resurrection we shall dwell in the Divine Idea alone" (Ep. xvii.). Last, and from the human point of view most significant of all, is his vigorous assertion of moral liberty: "By such assertions to argue the will enslaved is as if you were to say, *I cannot fly: therefore my will is in bondage.*" In keeping with this is his estimate of good works and his doctrine of salvation:

¹ See two articles in the "Revue des deux Mondes" of 1848, vol. i., pp. 585, 817. "These articles," writes Mr. Gordon, "are superseded by Pelayo's masterly analysis of Servetus as a 'pantheistic' thinker in 'Los Heterodoxos Españoles,' vol. ii."

"In the gospel, to save is *to make whole*; that is, to heal one who is sick. . . . Good works avail when they are *naturally* good: they are even of service to those who are justified already." All this was sorely against the mind of the Reformers, and doubtless weighed in the scale against him. But thus it was, says the Lutheran Tollin, that "he won for the Lutherans their doctrine of liberty against the rigid Predestination of Calvin, which he attacks with his keenest weapons." The pantheism he was charged with might, it is true, seem to swallow up all free will in man. But, as he held it himself, the life of God in the soul necessarily implies free volition: "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."¹

By diligent search among his writings, a list was made of thirty-eight charges, or counts of heresy. Some of these turn on terms or phrases of pure metaphysics—essence, substance, person (*hypostasis*), and the like—which have little or no clear meaning to the common mind; some on matters of gratuitous offense, as when he compares the popular trinity to a three-headed Cerberus or the monster Geryon, or says the Trinitarians are logically atheists, or calls the rite of baptism "sorcery." Some are affronts or offenses purely personal. In the final summing up are given these four: "Scandals and troubles in the churches, lasting now these four-and-twenty years; blasphemies against God; infesting the world with heresies; calumnies against the leading Reformers, especially Calvin." The grounds of these have been sufficiently shown already.

The real motive of his condemnation was a sort of terror that came upon the Protestant world, lest its great work

¹ It is in exposition of his theory of the Spirit working within us that he introduces his famous illustration, or discovery, of the pulmonary circulation of the blood ("Restitutio," pp. 169-174). Perhaps this was what made his enemies say that he had reduced the Holy Ghost to air!

should be undone. Not heresy as opinion, but the propagation of heresy, was the crime of which Servetus was found guilty. As to the guilt of that, no doubt the minds of his judges were stirred by memories, less than thirty years old, of revolutionary disorders, Anabaptist and Antinomian, that went wild through all Germany. What the Reformation just then needed, as they might well think, was not so much liberty of thinking, as concert of action. Mere liberty of thinking they might well dread. There still lay before it a century of struggle, always obstinate and often desperate, to save its very life. Servetus had the faults, along with the fine chivalrous quality, of a free fighter in a deadly field. Mere freedom of speculation, like his, runs out fast to individualism, to infinite subdivision, to moral weakness and decay.

Servetus did, perhaps could do, no one great constructive work. That "Calvinism saved Europe" is a verdict cited with approval by the most advanced liberalism of our day.¹ This is a testimony, not to the truth of Calvin's creed, but to the rigor of his administration. Protestantism, to do its work in the world, had first of all to take the form of a strong executive force, inexorable, uncompromising, able to meet the adversary on his own ground. The relentless theocracy of Geneva, the rigid Presbyterianism that John Knox carried thence to Scotland, the military temper of the Netherlands under the sternest creed of Calvinism, the sober valor that founded a Puritan commonwealth in England and America—these made its dominating and fighting force. Servetus came "with a light heart" across its path, and was crushed. His martyrdom was its one chief crime against the free conscience it had invoked. The single motive we can easily understand or pardon in that crime is the genuine alarm his prosecu-

¹ By John Morley, in the "Nineteenth Century" for February, 1892.

tors betray, lest by forcing their hard-won liberties forward into fresh fields of controversy they should risk the whole. The error which looked to them so flagrant they hoped to burn away in his funeral pile. But his truth is saved for us by that very fire, which tries every man's work of what sort it is. For, without that baleful light, it would doubtless have perished with him.

CHAPTER III.

SOCINUS.

AMONG the Italian free inquirers who sought refuge in Switzerland from dread of the Roman Inquisition, we find the name of Lælius Socinus. He had been conspicuous (it is said) in a society or club formed in 1546 of about forty members, who were accustomed to meet in Vicenza, to discuss questions growing out of the new Reform, including the church doctrine of the Trinity. This was the same year when Servetus opened his correspondence with Calvin; and his doctrine had already (1539), as we see in Melanchthon's correspondence, been reported as dangerously current in northern Italy. What with him had been a motive of exalted religious mysticism became with these young men a topic of scholarly criticism and rational inquiry. The society, if it ever had a formal existence, was soon dispersed. Its secret ramifications were traced. The inquisitorial police were set on all sides to the task of uprooting its feeble growth. In Venice it was thought to suppress the rising heresy by drowning in the sea. We are told¹ how the victims were taken out by night in boat-loads, the boats being connected two-and-two by a plank laid across, upon which the condemned were placed; then, the boats being pulled suddenly apart, they were plunged into the water, just gasping a prayer to Christ as the waves of the Adriatic closed over them. The more fortunate found safety in exile. Lælius, with some of his com-

¹ By Cantù, also by Ranke.

panions, escaped to Switzerland in 1547; and here, after a year or two of travel, he found a home, usually in Zurich, for most of his remaining years, till his death, in 1562.¹

The family of Socinus (*Sozzini*) was eminent in Siena, and was allied by marriage with several houses of rank, notably that of Piccolomini. Their family record, as given by Cantù, preserves more than two hundred names. The father of Lælius, Mariano, had been "captain of the people," lecturer on jurisprudence in two or three universities, and ambassador to Florence and to the pope. An anecdote of his youth is that, being reproved for more than once neglecting a college exercise, he answered simply, "I have married a wife." "Well," said the professor, "Socrates was married too." "Ah, but," replied the student, "Xanthippe was a scold, and I dare say ugly at that; while my wife is both beautiful and sweet-tempered." Lælius was last but one in a family of twelve children; and would seem to have inherited his mother's serious loveliness of disposition, with a clear and sagacious understanding that led him, in later life, "to scent out as many errors in theology as he lived years."² As student of jurisprudence, he "sought its true source in the Divine fountains" of Scripture, and was early drawn into those questions of the Reformed theology which then attracted all the boldest minds of the day. When (to copy the words of Cameraarius) "he left a home rich in wealth and dignity," to become

¹ Mr. Gordon, in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, as the result of later investigations, treats the whole story of his flight, with the attending circumstances, as "a myth"; and relates that his attention was called to topics of reform by Camillo Renato, a Sicilian, who is described as a sort of Catholic Quaker.

² The phrase used in the *Life* by Samuel Przykowski (*-covius*), one of the "Polish Brethren," whose biography of the Socini, uncle and nephew, is the earliest and most authentic source for our scanty knowledge of them.

(adds Maier) "an exile for his faith in Christ," he was not quite twenty-two.¹

His candid intelligence, with the confiding sweetness of manner native to him, drew forth an almost unvarying tribute of personal affection from the leading German and Swiss Reformers, very rare in that day of acrimonious disputation. Bullinger, the wise and generally broad-hearted successor of Zwingli as pastor of Zurich, was his warm friend from first to last. Melancthon wrote of him to Maximilian of Austria, afterwards emperor: "His diligence and fidelity are such that he might well serve an illustrious sovereign in embassies and in many other affairs;" adding that, by the reading of prophets and apostles, he has been "brought to worship of the true God and all offices of piety, and has begun the study of Hebrew with a burning zeal for sacred learning." "Furthermore," writes Bullinger, "he is clear-eyed (*prudens*) and active, worthy whether to teach in public or to serve some prince in high matters of state." "He is a man," adds Auerbach, "most accomplished in every sort of merit; most dear to me, and my best of comrades" (*fautor*). Maffinski, one of the group of Polish gentlemen whom he met as fellow-students in Germany, reports of him in 1550: "I am ever so much (*oppido quam*) delighted with his gracious company. I honor his upright character, his frankness in speaking his mind, with his learning and purity of life. Not only I but everybody here loves him and makes much of him. In a word, there is not a man in Wittenberg who does not seek and prize his friendship." His scholar friends would speak of him, playfully, by the title of Cicero's dialogue on Friendship, as "Lælius, *sive de Amicitia*."

¹ These citations, with those which immediately follow, are copied from "Die Protestantischen Antitrinitarier vor Fausto Socin," by F. Trechsel, a pastor near Berne, who has given, largely from manuscript sources, our only detailed portraiture of the man.

Almost the only discordant note in this singular harmony of praise appears to be from the uneasy jealousy of two of his own countrymen—Celso Martinengo, who had been stung by some freedom in a young Italian, an associate of Lælius, and that acrid busybody, Peter Paul Vergerio. These two convey to Bullinger their “grave suspicion of him, that he favors the opinion of Arius, Servetus, and the Anabaptists, and does not acknowledge or sincerely profess adoration of the holy Trinity.” Calvin, too, with whom he has been on terms of friendly communication, writes to him in 1552: “I am very sorry that the generous intelligence which the Lord has bestowed on you should busy itself vainly upon matters of no account.” He adds the warning, which some have taken as a threat: “Unless you quickly cure this itch of questioning, it is to be feared that you will bring upon yourself heavy sufferings.” It is to the credit of both, that this sharp hint did not sever the good-will between them; and that, in spite of yet graver differences, the good offices of Bullinger kept them friends to the end.

The story of his life for the fifteen years after leaving Italy is easiest told by marking it in three portions, divided by two visits to his native land. Speaking generally, he is to be known in the first of these as the eager and restless inquirer; in the second, as the courteous and candid disputant; in the last, as the recluse student and thinker, with a probable tendency to lines of more radical speculation. But he is never a man of clear positive thought, or an active propagandist. Winning and ingenuous, he sought and found friends in the several local circles of the Reformation. He discusses with Calvin in Geneva the physical difficulties involved in a resurrection of the body. He takes part at Basel with Myconius, whose “Confession” has brought a larger tolerance among the Reformers than

the "Consensus" touching the Eucharist had succeeded in getting accepted in Zurich. In 1550 he is a student with Melanchthon at Wittenberg, an associate among the group of young Polish gentlemen, who brought (it would seem) a breath of freer inquiry along with their fresh out-door air into the ancient precincts of university life. By their persuasion, perhaps, or moved by the wish to visit a field where the Reformation itself was new,—“to break the crust” (says Trechsel) that began to gather round it in its old Saxon home,—he went for a short stay to Poland, passing on his way through Vienna and Prague, those spots so full of political and religious memories, and thence to the great university town of Cracow. Returning in the autumn of 1551, he found himself again at Zurich, warmly interested in the affair of Bolsec, a French Protestant who had dared to dispute with Calvin his rigid doctrine of Predestination, and so was in exile from Geneva. He engages, besides, in earnest correspondence with a new friend, Walter, on the true meaning of penitence, pardon, and the Divine decree.

Partly, perhaps, to shun the stringent air of controversy, he set out in the following spring for a visit to Italy, which extended to a nearly two years' stay. But he was chiefly moved by the new hope that seemed to dawn there. His native Siena had lately made itself independent, by help of a French alliance. The power of the Inquisition had just received a check, and for a time it looked as if a new day of liberty might open to the old Italian republics. We find him, again, at Padua, visiting his father in Bologna, lingering through most of the following year at Siena. But what seemed dawn had (says the historian) proved to be only twilight: the day of freedom to the Italian republics was past. With whatever of disappointment, he was again in Switzerland in January, at Geneva in the spring, of 1554.

Here the air was full of the agitation, still fresh, follow-

ing the death of Servetus six months before. Calvin's defense of that act had led the way to new disputes. Lælius, all whose sympathies ran the other way, was now drawn to Calvin, it has been said, "by the attraction of opposites." He did not, it is true, share the passionate resentment of some of his countrymen, or break openly with Calvin. His feeling on the subject was, however, well enough known. He was charged with being the real author of a vigorous pamphlet in French, published under the name of Martin Bellie, which gathered up, said its critics, a mess (*farrago*) of arguments from the ancient church and from modern Reformers, to prove that spiritual error should be met only by weapons of the Spirit: the secular power, it said, is not competent to deal with heresy. There was no need to defend or to attack the opinions of Servetus. His books had been too thoroughly destroyed, was the complaint, for any one to find out what they were.

It was a time fruitful of controversy. So far as Lælius proved himself a combatant at all, it was at this period of his life. Early in 1554 he argues with his friend Bullinger on Divine grace and the efficacy of sacraments: he will hardly grant that the "seal" of God's promise can be an act performed by man; his logic will not accept the mystery which in the view of the Genevan school enshrines the act. In this same year, again, the implacable tyranny of Rome compelled the Protestant inhabitants of Locarno to choose between their home and their faith. It was hard to say which were the more wretched, those who abased themselves to forsake that faith and submit to the contemptuous tolerance offered them, or those who for the sake of it were driven homeless into the inclemency of wintry and northern skies. A congregation formed ten years before by Italian fugitives from the Inquisition had been hospitably received in Zurich, whom the new exiles

now joined; and to them Ochino, lately back from England, was appointed preacher. Lælius was soon on friendly terms with him; and it was now that Martinengo and Vergerio whispered their doubts of his soundness in the trinitarian faith. Again, the next year (1555) a discussion followed between him and a friend named Wolf, respecting the Trinity and the personality of the Holy Ghost. Here it appeared, not that he had expressed denial of the doctrine, but that he would not pledge assent to any statement of it that could not be put in the words of Scripture. Bullinger, still true to his friend, succeeded in turning aside the current of suspicion and ill-will that set against him, and even soothed Calvin's irritable mood so far as the person of Lælius was concerned. But from this time on we hear no more of his engaging in controversy. He kept his opinions more and more to himself. Whatever shape he may have given them in his private writings, they are to be gathered chiefly from the works of his nephew, who regarded himself as his natural heir and literary executor.

Meanwhile, events were calling him once more into Italy. In this year (1555) Siena had surrendered after a long struggle, to be soon after turned over to the domination of Florence. The next year his father died at Bologna, leaving the family estate in a condition that needed attending to. In the general danger and disturbance, powerful friends were required to make the journey practicable. In 1558, after a friendly reception from Calvin in Geneva, and fortified by letters from Melancthon to Maximilian, he went again by way of Austria into Poland, where he passed six months among the now vigorous and influential party of the Reformers. Letters from Maximilian and from King Sigismund insured his personal safety, perhaps under a diplomatic commission, during his short stay in

Italy the following spring. But his correspondence had brought the ill repute of heresy upon his father's house. The family estate was confiscated to the Inquisition. Of his brothers, some were cast into prison, while two, with their nephew Faustus, then a youth of twenty, made their escape into France. Lælius returned to Zurich in August, to live a little longer there in poverty and seclusion, cheered now and then by visits from his nephew (then a student of law in Lyons), whom, it is likely, he made the sharer of his more private thoughts. He died on the 14th of May, 1562, at the age of thirty-seven. "Not one of his many former friends," says Trechsel, "bade him good cheer when he went home to the land of Vision—he whose lot it had been to bear so heavy a burden here below, seeing not and yet believing."

Faustus Socinus, to whom we may henceforth give the family name he is known by in history, was now at the age of twenty-three. He held the memory of his uncle in peculiar love and veneration; and (it is likely), to protect his good name and take in charge his literary bequests, went at once, on learning his death, to Zurich. Whether he gave up the hope of such a reformation as they had looked forward to together, and seriously meant to reconcile himself with Rome, is not clear. At all events, he made friends, as Servetus had done, of those in authority under Roman rule. He recovered something of his inheritance, and was for twelve years a diligent, serviceable, and valued official under Cosmo de' Medici, Archduke of Florence, in service of his daughter Isabella. He was a man of harder, firmer, and probably more worldly temper than Lælius; the son of an elder brother, Alexander, who died when he was yet a child not three years old, so that he laments the loss of parents and the lack of early instruction. Against this his biographer sets

the advantage of having had no training in dogmatic theology, and little of the school logic.

Till the age of twenty-three, his studies were chiefly of letters and jurisprudence. Lælius had rather hinted than taught his own opinions; and it was as a man of thirty-six, after his twelve years' residence at court, that he took the resolution once for all to devote his life to the study and defense of truth (1574). The death of his patroness Isabella, strangled by her husband, may have quickened his resolve, though he withstood the generous urgency of Francesco that he should remain in the archducal service; his property, at all events, was secured to him so long as his name should not be given out as the author of heretical writings. He was cordially received at Basel, where he passed three years in study. Being guided, as he frankly declared, by the writings and hints of Lælius, he now stood ready to declare and maintain his views. This he did in a little treatise on the nature and office of Christ, published without concealment, but without his name in the title.

It is well here to make as clear as we can what was the nature of the task, and what were its conditions, as they lay before his mind at the date we have now reached (1578). The younger Socinus has held in history the unenviable reputation of being the leader in a theological movement blankly if somewhat evasively rationalistic, which, so far as it went, altered, if not destroyed, the very substance of the Christian faith as this had hitherto been held. It is certainly not true that he intended any such result. And it is only by ignorance or misunderstanding that the Unitarian movement which has followed since his day has been so persistently called by his name. The misunderstanding has been alike unjust to him and to it.

To see what his thought really was, we must bear in

mind that the Reformation was now more than half a century past its reaction from that radical revolt which was the first response from the German people to Luther's sonorous appeal. It had had its own record of strifes and divisions. It had attempted by blood and fire to suppress heresies in its own fold. It had become crystallized in sects. It had grown to be a recognized power in shaping the policy of a great kingdom like England, and in maintaining a revolt like that of Holland against the strongest of military monarchies. As a political power, too, it had secured terms of independence in the Peace of Augsburg (1555), which lasted down to the great convulsion of the Thirty Years' War. Meanwhile, its intellectual foundation was as unsettled as ever. Theology, in the futile debates of Flacius and Osiander, was beginning to wander in the field of metaphysics. Practically, the Reformation at this period exhibits itself as a moral force of prodigious energy, which we see in such examples as the Huguenots of France and in the heroic revolt of the Netherlands,¹ but distracted and unorganized, except where compacted by the rigor of Calvinism; while the Lutheran church and state were almost neutral in the struggle on which its very life was staked. The only appeal that could be taken, where the party of Reform was so helplessly divided against itself, was to the tribunal of reason—reason, that is to say, fortified and enlightened by a fresh critical study of the Scriptures, the one recognized court of appeal.

The Italian Reformers had from the beginning shown a certain logical or rationalizing temper, which made them in a degree indifferent to the arguments that upheld the more mystical dogmas of the German theologians. They accepted the Reformation in more radical fashion, when

¹ The great defense of Leyden was in the year before Socinus quitted Italy; the massacre of St. Bartholomew was two years earlier.

they accepted it at all. The supernaturalist theory of the church, remarks Saisset, rests on the four main pillars, or mysteries, of the Trinity, the Creation, the Incarnation, and the Redemption. It was the last alone—the theory of Redemption, with the ecclesiastical corruptions that had grown into it—that made the point of attack to the earlier Reformers. All the others they were equally and (as we have seen) ostentatiously prompt to defend. In the martyrdom of Servetus they had testified, even passionately, that heresy as to those points could find tolerance with them no more than with the Inquisition itself. He had struck, boldly but unskillfully, at the entire fabric, aiming to substitute for it a metaphysical structure of his own, which embodied (as he held) the real sense of Scripture. What might, perhaps, be done by studying still more critically the whole system of dogma, and comparing it with the word of revelation—to be interpreted, this time, not in the light of a traditional creed, which after all rested only on a damaged church authority, but purely by the educated common sense of critics?

In attempting so much as that, Socinus really opened the way that led straight to the rationalism of a later day. The process was inevitable, however unintended. And with it must come a sure narrowing and sterilizing of religious thought; the drying up, perhaps, of some of the purest fountains of the religious life. This result Socinus could not possibly foresee. He was not, like Servetus, a man of religious genius; but he was a man of clear convictions, and genuine courage of his convictions. Still further, these convictions rested not, like the later rationalism, on postulates of physical or mental science, but on what he accepted, with unquestioning reverence, as the revealed Word of God. This we shall see in his unbending contention against the rationalism of his day, as represented

by Francis David (see p. 64). He was a man truly religious in his habit of thought, capable, as we shall see, of a patient, persistent, even heroic faith, such as belongs to a genuine religious leader. If dry and literal criticism of the sacred text were all, his service would not merit even the dubious honor of having given rise to a new form of heresy. Whether he was clearly conscious of what he meant or not, he meant something more than this. Calvinism, as he could plainly see, had come to be a power in the world by building its religious theory into a scheme of positive and invincible logic—invincible, if its premises be once granted. These premises were found by a precise and rigid interpretation of Scripture. But what if this interpretation were a mistaken one? What if the church theory of the Divine nature, which Calvin asserted, were no more sound than the church theory of human redemption, which Calvin riddled and disallowed? Might not a better understanding of the Word open the way to a doctrinal system equally clear, positive, self-consistent with that of Calvin, about which the religious life should organize itself with equal vigor, but more freely, more humanely, more intelligently?

All this may not have been in the conscious thought of Socinus when his thirty years' life-work lay before him; but it may have lain in his mind vaguely and unshaped, as a dream. It seems, at any rate, to be the proper clue for tracing the main direction of that work, as we follow it through its incidents and look back upon it as a whole. It was not, properly, a work of speculation or of dogma, like that of Servetus. It was a work of criticism and of church construction. To see it in its proper bearings, we must look back first to the defeated and paralyzed condition of liberal theology in Switzerland, its home, in the years since the trial and condemnation of Servetus.

This condition is best presented to us in a series of Italian names.

The ashes of Servetus, said Beza, had quickly begun to stir. The echo of his name came back to Geneva from beyond the mountains. Matteo Gribaldo, a jurist from Padua, had been a member of the Italian congregation there when Servetus was put to death; and he at once drew upon himself the wrath of Calvin by his indignant condemnation of that act. He further followed the lead of the Spanish heretic into speculations on the Divine nature, which he can conceive, he says, "not otherwise than as two Gods, the one deriving his existence from the other." This moves the scorn of Calvin, and we find the rude adversary proscribed and in exile, till his death by plague in 1564.

The story of the eloquent preacher Bernard Ochino we have already heard; and how his restless pursuit of the flickering light of religious fancies scandalized his fellows, and brought him, in 1564, to exile and death in far Moravia.

George Blandrata, a Piedmontese physician, of vigorous understanding and dominating temper, had fled in 1554 to Geneva from the menace of the Inquisition; but falling here into controversy with Calvin, and into endless disputings about the proper dignity of the Son, he withdrew first to Zurich and afterwards to Poland, where we meet his name a few years later.

Again, we find the name of Blandrata's associate, Paolo Alziati, also a physician, a rude "campaigner" from Milan, who about 1556 disputes in something the method of Servetus, asserting that the man Christ Jesus was the Word in person, and that *all* of Christ, not his human nature only, died upon the cross. He was afterwards active with Blandrata in Poland.

Last, Valentino Gentile, a Calabrian from near Naples, young and hot-headed, was found (says Calvin) to be "giving to drink dirty water from the Servetian puddle," holding, like Arius, that Christ was a subordinate deity, the *created* Word clothed in flesh: the trinity of Calvin, he said, really meant four gods. He was forced to recant, to burn his own writings, and to take oath not to leave the city without official permit. Tiring of the restraint, he escaped, to lead a wandering life in France, Poland, and Moravia; was captured afterwards in Savoy, and sent to Berne; and here, condemned for heresy and contempt of law, he was beheaded on the 9th of September, 1566, at the age of forty-six. With him expired, after thirteen years of strife, the last echo of the controversy stirred by Servetus in Switzerland.¹

Meanwhile, from the year 1560, Blandrata had gained great influence among the party of the Reformed in Poland. He carried this influence so far that, at a synod held in 1562 at Pinczow, he brought their churches to decide that "all disputes regarding the trinity, mediation, or incarnation should be abandoned; all expressions unknown to the primitive church should be excluded; while the clergy were to preach the pure Word of the gospel, unaltered by human comment." A proposed test, that those who maintained the subordination of the Son should be compelled to resign their charge, was voted down, "whereby the anti-trinitarian bias of the synod became evident; and a confession prepared by Blandrata in the very words of Scripture seems to have been adopted by silent assent." (Wallace.)

In the following year (1563) Blandrata went by invitation of Isabella, sister of the Polish king and mother of the young prince John Sigismund, into Transylvania, to become the court physician there. In this post he found

¹ Cantù gives the names of thirty-five of these Italian exiles.

large opportunity of guiding the course of the Reformation in that valiant principality. He soon won to his view both Isabella and her son, who till the end of his life was a consistent champion of religious liberty. A still more important ally was the eloquent preacher of the Reformed doctrine, Francis David, who had brought the seed of it with him in 1551 from his studies in Wittenberg,¹ and, with a singular repute for zeal and independence, had been since 1556 pastor of the metropolitan church in the capital city, Kolozsvár. (Klausenburg). By one account, he had retired before a sharp opposition into Poland, whence he returned with Blandrata. Together, their labors were so effective that, within five years, the privileges they contended for were officially sanctioned by a royal charter, and those constitutional rights were defined under which the Unitarian communion in Transylvania has continued to our day. The more detailed narrative of these transactions, with their results, belongs to a later chapter.

Under the date 1568 the name "Unitarian" appears for the first time as the recognized title of a religious body. A decree had been passed by the diet at Torda in 1557, and confirmed in 1563 by the estates of the realm, securing to persons of all faiths the free exercise of their own worship. "Besides this," says the Transylvanian historian Bod, "the various religions formed a union together, [pledging themselves] that they would not on the ground of religion with mutual hate trouble and persecute each other. From this union they were called *The United*, or *Unitarian*; such, namely, as might inhabit the kingdom by equal right with others of different faith, with whom they should make the commonwealth united and one. The name was retained by those who confessed the Father alone as the true and

¹ Or, as another account has it, from Altorf in Bavaria, where a group of "Crypto-Socinians" is found as late as 1617 (Zeltner: Leipzig, 1729).

eternal [One], and was voluntarily adopted by them; while those who asserted three persons in one essence were contrariwise termed *Trinitarian*."¹ The name occurs in a narrative of David's controversy of this year (1568) with Peter Melius; and it is first found (says Professor Boros) as the recorded title of a legalized religion "in the first article of a diet held at Szekfalva in October, 1600."

Within a few years the more rationalizing temper of Francis David carried him beyond his associates so far as to deny that "worship" of Christ, or prayer addressed to him in person, ought to be allowed in the ritual of their churches. This step the more politic Blandrata urgently and at length bitterly opposed. The existence of their religious body, barely tolerated at best under political changes that had come to pass, seemed to be at stake. Finding David impossible to convince, he sent in 1578 to consult the Swiss liberal leaders at Basel; and here Socinus, with the fresh distinction of his essay upon the Trinity (which Blandrata is said to have seen in manuscript), appeared to be the man best fitted to make a last attempt. For five months, accordingly, from November till the following April, we find Socinus in Transylvania, under the same roof with David, vainly endeavoring, by dint of argument, to win him from his conviction.² The dispute, after being

¹ "Historia Hungarorum Ecclesiastica," bk. ii., ch. xvi., p. 413. Peter Bod (1712-69) was a student three years at Leyden, and devoted twenty-four years to this work. A very fine edition, ~~continued to our own day~~, was published in Leyden in 1888. This history is very hostile to the Unitarians, and has numerous defects and errors. The above passage is copied, with some variation, in the Introduction to Rees's translation of the "Racovian Catechism" (Longmans, London, 1818).

² Their respective arguments, as drawn up in eighteen propositions on each side, are given in Wallace's "Antitrinitarian Biography" (vol. ii., pp. 248-255). The detailed statement and defense of Socinus may be found in his Works (vol. ii., pp. 709-766). This little touch of personal feeling may be worth recording: "As for my living in his [David's] house, this was no gratuitous favor from him. In fact, I paid a very high board. This, it is true, was afterwards repaid me by Blandrata; for he had invited me on these terms, that he should be at all the expense of my journey and stay in Transylvania" (p. 711).

debated (it is said) before a packed conference under distorted testimony, was referred for final sentence to the prince, Christopher Bathori; and by his order David was cast into prison, where he died a few months after. The cruel treatment resulting in his death was ascribed by his friends to the vindictive temper of Socinus, who some years later defended himself in a long letter addressed to the Transylvanian clergy.

His defense may well be accepted. It was clearly against his interest, remarks his biographer, granting ever so cruel a temper in him, that David should appear in the light of a martyr. Blandrata returned the following year to Poland, where he fell into difficulties with his fellow-religionists, whom he was charged with betraying to the Jesuits; and about ten years after these events, having (it would seem) reconciled himself meanwhile with the Roman Church, he was strangled by a nephew, impatient of his inheritance.

Socinus was now established in Cracow. The work for which he is best and most honorably remembered was done in the twenty-five years between his controversy with Francis David and his death. The key to it is found partly in the grateful memory his friends kept of him, partly in the Latin folios that make the first two volumes of the "Polish Brethren."¹ Most of the argument and disquisition contained in this obscure collection may be safely neglected by the student of our day. We need not hope to make these dry bones live. But there is a story of tragic interest connected with them, which we shall have to follow, in outline, a little further on.

His first step was to seek the good-will and win the confidence of those congregations in Poland nearest him in faith. He would have united himself with them from the start; but, obstinate in their Anabaptist tradition, they re-

¹ *Corpus Fratrum Polonorum*, 9 vols. A supplementary volume includes the Life of the Socini by Samuel Przypkowski.

fused him because he would not be rebaptized. In fact, rejecting the church dogma of the Fall, he held the rite itself to be a hurtful superstition. So Servetus had held; and we find, a little later, that the practice had been generally given up by the Unitarians of Transylvania, who, however, observe it strictly since, as the formal initiation into their church-fellowship. Socinus remained true to his co-religionists, notwithstanding; he stood to their support, promptly and ably, when their rights or their doctrines were attacked; and before long they received him heartily into their communion on his own terms.

The first mischance that befell him here was when, about 1583, his defense of religious liberty was misrepresented to the King of Poland as an attack on royal authority. His political opinions taught, or seemed to teach, the unlawfulness of all authority resting on force, and of capital punishment in the repression of crime; and in this, says Bayle, he seemed rather a monk in disguise, come to betray his own people, than an exile for the cause of the truth. He now retired for some years to a provincial town, where he married the daughter of a country gentleman who gave him hospitality; and here, in 1587, was born his only child, a daughter, Agnes (his mother's name), whose descendants hold a place of honor in the later story.¹ In the same year he fell into a grave sickness, aggravated through grief at his wife's death; a little later, he was severely straitened in his fortunes by loss of the income that had come to him hitherto from his estate in Italy.² The chief events we meet in the later record are the following.

¹ It is through her son, Andreas Wyszowaty (*Wissowatius*), that we have some of the earlier accounts of Lælius and others; a grandson, Andreas, was preacher after the exile in Klausenburg, Transylvania; a granddaughter married Samuel Przykowski (several times cited), the most eloquent champion of the plundered and banished Unitarians of Poland. (See the genealogy in Bock, vol. iii., p. 686. See also p. 92, below.)

² See above, pp. 56, 57. His property was sequestered by the Inquisition in 1590.

At a great conference held in 1588, at Brest on the Lithuanian frontier, he appears by his victorious contention to have established, once for all, his supremacy as undisputed leader of opinion among his fellow-believers. But the greater publicity now given to his name was soon followed by the story of the griefs and persecutions of his later years. In a letter addressed from Cracow, October 7, 1594, to a friend at Wittenberg, he thus relates a cowardly attack made on him in the streets: "I was seized by a trooper who shouted out that I was an Arian who had led his father into misbelief, and smeared my face abominably with mud, threatening me at the same time with the thrust of a musket." He got off by pitiful entreaty, but was waylaid for hours after by a ruffian, who (he thinks) would have shot him through with a bullet but for impatience at the long waiting. The story of a later assault, which brought his evil fortune to its extremity, is thus told:¹ "On Ascension day, in 1598, a mob of students, under Jesuit instigation, thronged the streets of Cracow, dragging violently along a man half naked, torn from his sick-bed, amid the hootings of the crowd. His books, papers, and manuscripts were plundered from him, and burned upon the market-place. With a drawn sword over his head, and death by fire threatened before his eyes, the victim cried out, 'I retract nothing. What I was I am, and by the grace of the Lord Jesus that I shall be till my last breath. Do you what God permits!' This man was Faustus Socinus, then fifty-nine years old. His last words, six years later, were: 'Weary and exhausted, not by life, but by persecutions and hardships, I hasten with joy and confident hope to the finishing of my course, which assures me of rest from trouble and recompense of toil.'"

¹ Here copied from an interesting and most instructive monograph entitled "Siebenbürgen" (Transylvania), by Professor Rath: Heidelberg, 1880.

In person, says his biographer, Socinus was moderately tall, with prominent forehead and fine eyes. "He was extremely self-denying of indulgences, careful of his health (which suffered from stone and colic), and in advanced years was disabled by dimness of sight. In manner he was simple, without haughtiness or ostentation. Courteous and attentive to his friends, his fault, if fault it were, was too little self-regard. Shall we say that he had more of intellect or of fire? We may best say, a naturally hasty temper kept well in check, with great patience under ill treatment and ingratitude, and great self-control. His meditation, he thought, should not be on death, but rather on the life to come. Many have tried, but I know not if any have equaled him in virtue."

These are the words of one (a great-grandson by marriage) who as a boy of twelve may probably have known him in person, and who wrote of him within thirty years after his death. If their tone is that of panegyric, as has been said, at least they are words in praise of a man who surely has not in general suffered from excess of praise. In truth, the proper fame of Socinus has been obscured by the somewhat narrow and dry positivism of his intellect. He has nothing of the genius and passion that deepen the tragic interest we find in the story of Servetus; little of the emotional warmth or the mystical devoutness so familiar in later examples of the Unitarian faith. We are rarely moved or touched by anything in his style of thought, or the arguments he clothes it in. Whatever he may receive in the way of friendly sympathy will most likely be given to the few heroic or tragical passages of his life. But for more than two hundred years his name was that of an acknowledged religious leader. It is our duty now to seek in his writings the direction he gave so long to the opinions of his successors. Most of these writings, indeed, are not

constructive or independent, but rather occasional and polemic. Our interest in them is wholly as records and way-marks in the history of opinion, not as containing a doctrinal system of any present weight or value.

In examining them, we are first of all struck by the childlike and almost bald directness of the assertion—not argument—in which his opinions and expositions are set forth. For Socinus held, says Neander, an even exaggerated supernaturalism; in his fundamental positions no play whatever is allowed to human reason. It is as if they only needed to be stated, to command assent. There is little or no cumulative force; little or no expansion or enforcement of fresh thought or learning; only the weight of simple repetition, in a tone of entire good faith, such as sometimes has the best possible effect in the assertion of moral axioms. But theological propositions are not moral axioms; and the effect, we must confess, is mostly weak. It is so, in a marked degree, with an early argument on the authority of Scripture—the only one of his writing that appears to have been published in English. A still better example is his exposition of the first chapter of John's Gospel, which runs somewhat thus: "In the beginning" is at the opening of the Christian dispensation; "the Word" is Christ, as (by a sort of synecdoche) *declarer* of the word, or truth, of God; "the Word was with God," as being known only to him until the baptism of Jesus; it "was God"—which is here not the name of a Person, but an attribute of power, authority, and love; "the world was made by him"—that is, men were by him created anew to good works; "and the world knew him not" as the author of this new life. Such a style of exposition is as far apart from the philosophic interpretation of our day as from the dogmatic interpretation it was meant to displace. No wonder it has stood all these years as a butt of angry contempt to the dogmatic theolo-

gian, an example of shallow incompetence to the educated student of opinion.

Again, we have seen that Socinus held, just as positively, to the worship of Christ as a Divine Person; and we naturally look to see how his view differs from that of Servetus, to whom Christ is the true God so far as he can be known to men, and yet in the strictest sense a man. Socinus is here curiously literal and rationalistic. Christ, he holds, was (to quote the Apostle's phrase) "obedient unto death, even the death of the cross; *wherefore* God hath given him a name that is above every name," rewarding him (so to speak) by an official divinity since his resurrection and ascension, commissioned with full power to bestow life and immortality, while yet our own brother, who can feel with us. Christ ascends and dwells in heaven, he says elsewhere (p. 675), before he begins to fulfill his office upon earth. It is thus, as a delegated representative, or official deity, that we owe him homage, just as we should to a royal envoy as representing the king's majesty.¹ This is what is really meant by Thomas's exclamation, "My Lord and my God!" And in this narrow sense, of an orthodoxy all his own, he felicitates his fellow-believers on the prosperous advance of their faith in the last thirty years, in spite of bigoted obstructionists on one side and "semi-Judaizers" (followers of David) on the other.

In his formal treatise on the Christian Religion he gives us this fine ethical definition, that Christianity is "the heavenly doctrine touching the way of eternal life," which consists in obedience to the Divine law. This he still improves upon in the abridgment which served as basis to the "Racovian Catechism," by saying, simply, that it is

¹ Mr. Gordon plausibly holds that this interpretation was the key suggested by Lælius, and shows how readily it could be employed to justify the use of orthodox phraseology in another than the orthodox sense.

"*the way set before us to eternal life.*" And it is interesting to hear him, in the breadth of this generous definition, call upon all true Poles and Lithuanians "to unite [against their spiritual tyrants] with those who are unjustly styled Ebionites and Arians"—a counsel which Protestants of that day were fatally slow to follow.

Socinus does not believe that human nature was changed by the Fall: before it man was mortal, and men have been naturally capable since of virtue, freewill, and religion. He therefore finds the grounds of religion in human nature itself, and not merely as a supernatural gift (p. 537). The kind of satisfaction demanded by Calvin's theory of atonement, he says, cannot be made. Still, man is by nature both mortal and sinful; he needs regeneration, change of heart, deliverance from the bondage of death: for he is not of immortal essence; a future life is the direct and special gift of God. That Divine gift is promised as the reward of penitence, submission, and obedience; and it is to carry this glad message that the Son of Man is sent, his own resurrection being our pledge of eternal life. The unfaithful, on the other hand, do not suffer torment in hell hereafter; they only lose their portion in the promise, and so "perish everlastingly." These points of doctrine, with their truth and their limitation, contain the substance of that belief properly called Socinian.

This name has often been employed to cover all forms of Unitarian belief. Thus Carlyle uses it, in disparagement, to designate a theology so radically hostile to it as that of James Martineau. Such celebrity may be said to have been fairly earned by the singular influence of this system in shaping the opinion of most disbelievers of the Trinity, especially in England, during the century that followed Socinus's death. But in truth there are, and have been from the first, three distinct types of antitrinitarian opinion:

namely, the Socinian, which has been briefly described above; the Arian, which was held by many eminent divines in the Church of England, and by most of the early Unitarians in America; and the Sabellian, of which, in the period we have now reviewed, Servetus is the best-known type. If we regard their more recent affiliations, we may say that the Socinian doctrine led most readily to the eighteenth-century Deism; that the Arian most easily grew into the peculiar form of religious rationalism more prevalent fifty years ago than now; and that the doctrine of Servetus most naturally expands, under the critical science of our time, into the highly poetic and imaginative symbolism so characteristic of the present stage of religious speculation.

For the sake of a clear historical understanding of our subject, as well as in justice to the great variety of minds touched with the Unitarian opinion, it is important to keep these distinctions in view. Probably no person now alive is interested to defend the theory of Socinus, as such. Its value to us is purely historical, as marking a particular stage in the evolution of opinion. But it is more than a denominational concern, it is of human interest, to recognize whatever was honest and of good report in one who has suffered so great and unmerited obloquy—the man Socinus, of whom an unfriendly biographer has said that “he so excelled in the loftiness of his genius and the suavity of his disposition, such was the strength of his reasoning and the force of his eloquence, so signal were the virtues which he displayed in the sight of all, so great were his natural endowments and so exemplary was his life, that he appeared formed (as it were) to capture the affections of mankind.”¹

¹ Rev. George Ashwell, “*De Socino et Socinianismo*” (Oxford, 1680), quoted by Wallace.

CHAPTER IV.

THE POLISH BRETHREN.

THE name "Polish Brethren" is more commonly given to a group of theologians, especially to seven whose writings, in ^{now} ~~ten~~ Latin folios, make up the body of exposition and defense of the Unitarian doctrine as held for about a century in Poland, then its best-known refuge and home. But it is also given—just as the name "Bohemian" or "Moravian" Brethren is given—to denote a religious community having its peculiar belief, its own history more or less eventful, and its definite place in that larger movement we call the Reformation. It is here used in the latter sense.¹

Poland, early in the period we are concerned with, was one of the most brilliant and powerful monarchies of Europe. Warsaw was "the Paris of the East." The university at Cracow was "the daughter of the Sorbonne." Copernicus, its most illustrious name, a man ten years older than Luther, whose mind reached out independently in mathematics, astronomy, and economics, was the highest in the lists of science at his day. There was a moment in our history when it might even seem as if the firm resistance of one man, John Zamoyski, to the election of Henry of

¹ It is so used by our chief authority, Krasinski, "Historical Sketch of the Reformation in Poland" (2 vols.), vol. i., p. 144. Count Krasinski was a delegate to London from the short-lived Polish republic of 1831, and was compelled by its overthrow to remain in England. His work, though colored by prejudice against the Unitarian doctrine, is generous in spirit and of high authority. It was written by its accomplished author in English.

Valois as king would have put Poland in the front rank of modern powers, with a clearer assertion of religious liberty than was found anywhere else in Europe; for Poland had never been closely bound up, like the nations farther west, with the papal system. Just before the Reformation, in 1500, it was almost equally divided between the Greek and Latin churches. It made one of three great Slavic populations, Bohemia lying on the west and Lithuania on the east, nearly allied in blood, speech, and religious sympathy. Its political constitution gave it a nobility of freeholders, very numerous, excessively jealous of their political equality, independent of king or priest, controlling at every point the sovereign they had themselves chosen, calling their state a "commonwealth" down to the time of its dissolution and decay, claiming their right of absolute free choice as to the form of religion that should serve them best.

Thus the land lay broadly open to the invasion of opinion from every side. Its conquests in the east included provinces lying close to the heart of Russia. Towards the Black Sea it touched the Tartar hordes, most ferocious of pagans, and included a formidable population of Cossacks, zealots for the Oriental faith. Along the Baltic it disputed its frontier against Sweden and Prussia, and so was steadily pressed by a strong Lutheran propaganda. On the southwest, towards Hungary and Moravia, it was open to the advance of still more radical opinion. It had accepted the Waldensian doctrine in the thirteenth century; had fought the Inquisition and heard the pope called Antichrist in the fourteenth; had welcomed the doctrine of Wiclif, and by its delegates sided with John Huss at Constance, in the fifteenth; had made in 1450 its proud declaration against arbitrary power, that "we suffer no man to be imprisoned but by law"; and at the diet of 1459 had considered a

plan of church reform outlined by twelve specific charges of abuse against the hierarchy. Even in the time of her deepest degeneracy, Poland never underwent the curse of the Inquisition. Most of these indications, it is true, touch only the ruling class, the "nobility" of freeholders. The body of the people, here as elsewhere, were doubtless ignorant, servile, and superstitious—a class the Reformation could never reach.

To come now to the period of our own story. In 1525 the Reformation was already a popular demand in Danzig and in Thorn. In 1539 the diet declared complete liberty of the press. In 1548 came a colony of Bohemian Brethren, already beginning to be known as Moravians, most fervent and popular of Reformers, who, being harassed by the priesthood, found quiet and hospitality at Thorn. The next year a body of students, clamorous for greater freedom of instruction, being expelled from the University of Cracow, went to Königsberg, to return presently as confirmed Protestants in faith. In 1555 was brought about a religious union (confirmed by the Consensus of Sandomir in 1570) of the Bohemian Brethren with the Genevan party of Reformers, then strongest in Lithuania, under the lead of John Laski, just returned from the "Strangers' Church" in London,—the Lutherans holding sullenly and (as it later proved) fatally aloof. In 1556 it was ordained that each "noble" (landholder) should be free to adopt the form of religion he might elect. Finally, in 1572, the advancing wave of religious freedom reached its highest point in the declaration at Cracow, then the capital, that Protestant and Catholic held equal rights in the united kingdom of Poland and Lithuania—one commonwealth, since the Act of Union passed three years before.

We have seen already how many Unitarian Reformers, hard pushed in Italy or in Switzerland, found hospitality

in Poland. In 1546—the same year with the society at Vicenza, where, by the usual account, Lælius Socinus first appears—there was formed in Cracow an association for religious study and discussion. Without seeming to abjure the Catholic faith, this group of inquirers developed great freedom of opinion. Here the trinitarian dogma was first attacked by a Friesland Anabaptist, Adam Pastor. We find, soon after, a society of “Polish Brethren” of avowed antitrinitarian doctrine, under a native leader, Goniondski, having as early as 1565 “its synods, ministers, schools, and a complete ecclesiastical organization.” At a synod held on Christmas of this year in Wengrow, this body brought together “forty-seven ministers and eighteen eminent noblemen, besides a great number of inferior personages. . . . A letter of the Transylvanian churches was publicly read, and many individuals of the first families joined on that occasion the antitrinitarian churches. The synod rejected the baptism of infants, on the plea that it was neither used by the primitive churches nor commanded by the gospel; it was not, however, positively prohibited, but was left to the conscience of individuals, recommending charity and mutual forbearance.” The following confession of faith was published in 1574: “God has made the Christ (i.e., the most perfect Prophet) the most sacred Priest, the invincible King, by whom he has created the new world. This new world is the new birth, which Christ has preached, established, and effected. Christ has amended the old order of things, and granted to his elect eternal life, that they might, after God, believe in him. The Holy Spirit is not God, but a gift, the fullness of which the Father has bestowed upon his Son.” The same confession forbids oaths, lawsuits, or any form of persecution, reserving to the church the right of closing its doors against unruly members. The leader, Goniondski, maintained further

that a Christian should never bear arms, nor hold any civil office, nor use a sword. In token of this opinion he wore a wooden sword. He also, it is said, held to complete non-resistance and community of goods. This religious body was commonly known as Anabaptist, and it is sometimes called "the Lesser Church" of the Reformers, being excluded from the larger Protestant League.

We notice that this movement, so far as it took coherent shape, was strictly national or local. It may have had its first impulse from abroad. Of foreign names, we hear those of Adam Pastor; of Lælius Socinus, who visited Poland in 1551; of Ochino, banished in 1564; of Blandrata, whose influence has already been described. Excepting these, all the names that meet us are Polish. They represent, too, the aristocratic—that is, the most distinctly national—class in the kingdom. This circumstance accounts at once for its early strength and for its later instability as an element in the national life. It was far too exclusively, from the first, a movement of scholars and critics; far too little a movement of the people. It perished, in the end, at the hands of a pious mob acting as agents of the popular, the official, and what assumed to be the national, faith.

The confession cited above was published five years before the coming of Faustus Socinus, who did most to organize the movement and has given it a name in history. Its time of chief activity was during and just after the twenty-five years of service he gave it till his death, in 1604; but this service availed only to keep it alive, as a pretty vigorous school of theological opinion, through a period while Protestantism itself was steadily declining in Poland, under the crafty and most iniquitous oppression soon to be described. The days of its best vigor, and of its modest contribution to the general thought of that

age, were the fifty years before the fatal blow it received in 1638.

The date at which we are now arrived (1572) brings us to a crisis in the political as well as religious history of Poland. This crisis is very dramatic in the persons and incidents it brings upon the scene, and it will be convenient here to show the nature of it by a brief outline. More than any other one thing, it served to bring Poland disastrously to the front on the broader stage of European politics.

By a singular good fortune, the course of the Reformation hitherto—that is, from 1507 to 1572—coincided with the most brilliant period of the Polish commonwealth, under the two Sigismunds, father and son, who were the last kings in direct line of descent from the ancient Jagello stock. Though faithful Catholics, they were just and God-fearing men, as jealously guarding religious freedom as every other political right; rarely deceived into sanctioning, or seeming to sanction, acts of persecution such as were elsewhere common; but, so far as disputes among Protestants themselves were concerned, holding the scales of justice even. Their wise policy made the "Dissenters' Peace" (*pax dissidentium*) one great glory of free Poland. Their most eminent counselor, John Zamoyski, himself a Catholic, echoed their purpose when he said: "I would give one half of my life if those who have abandoned the Church of Rome should return willingly within its fold; but I would rather give all my life than suffer any person to be dragged into it by force."

This heroic line of Polish sovereigns originated thus. Ladislas Jagello, Prince of Lithuania, a barbarian and a pagan, had in 1386 accepted Christianity along with the crown of Poland and the hand of the Princess Hedwig (*Jadwiga*), only daughter of the last king. The two coun-

tries were not made one, however, till 1569, the double sovereignty having thus lasted not quite two hundred years. This was the period of the growth, the conquests, and the political glory of Poland. The kingdom, at the time we have now in view, extended along the Black Sea and the Baltic, reaching to the east almost as far as Moscow, and included in its dependencies the Danubian principalities, and on the west Moravia and Silesia. All the liberal institutions of Poland—its advance in science and letters, the founding of its chief universities, the protection given to religious liberty—belong to the reigns of this patriotic royal house. It was further closely associated, and had allied itself by marriage, with the equally ancient Lithuanian house of Radzivil, whose chiefs were almost sovereign in their own principality, and were for three generations leaders and champions of the Protestants: in name, Calvinist or Genevan; in fact, including Unitarians as well, who found in them steady protection of their threatened liberties.

Such indications naturally stirred the jealousy of the ruling church. Sigismund II. (Augustus) was sharply rebuked for his favor to the Protestants by that fierce patron of the Inquisition, the pope Paul IV. (1555–59), earlier known as Cardinal Caraffa, who urged him to a bloody suppression of them. But this he steadily refused. The one stain of persecution upon his reign is the burning alive of a poor girl, Dorothy Lazetska, in 1556, for the alleged guilt of selling a consecrated wafer to the Jews, to be used in their incantations; and this was brought about by forging his name to the warrant of execution. Poland, furthermore, never took part in the Council of Trent, or accepted its body of decrees.

At the death of Sigismund Augustus were left his three sisters, each closely connected with our story. Two were

1587-1632) brought about the commonwealth's prosperity. The Princess Anna, by a merit to be noticed presently (p. 84), was seen on her marriage with the fighting Transylvania, Stephen Bathori. A third sister, better known, with her son, the heroic Sigismund, was the first royal Unitarian convert, and in Transylvania.¹

John of Sigismund Augustus, in 1572, the king, had been only the formal assent given by the assembly of the greater nobles, to the succession. Sigismund himself had, in fact, been in his father's reign, when a boy of ten. It was a son to succeed him led to radical changes, ultimately fatal to the commonwealth. On whose jealousies and ambitions the commonwealth was likely to turn, were almost equally divided and united course on the part of the nobles, but they had not seemed to have put the control perpetually in their hands, and made Poland an equal ally of the first of Protestant powers. Their petty

It will aid in keeping clearly in view the course of the reigns of Sigismund I. ("the Great," 1507-48) and Augustus, (1548-72) are followed by an interregnum which succeeded:

ALOIS, son of Catherine de Medici.

BATHORI, husband of Anna Jagello.

ALOIS, son of Catherine de Medici, followed by two sons:

disputes and mutual antipathies made this wise course impracticable. The Catholic party were quick to take advantage of their disputes, weakening them by playing off one against the other; while the exclusion of Unitarians by all the rest from their league showed how vain a thing it was to look for real equality in affairs of state. Their best hope was in a Catholic leader, wise, large-hearted, and upright. Such a leader was John Zamoyski, "the Great," a Polish noble, now a little over thirty. Of Protestant birth, but "disgusted at the quarrels among the Protestants," he became the leader of a reform within the Catholic Church, and the foremost champion of political freedom. Void of personal ambition, he now sought only to make the choice of a king as popular as possible, and to confirm with it the absolute security of equal religious rights.

Two errors are here charged to Zamoyski: that he would not permit his own name to be presented as candidate for the vacant throne; and that, in trying to popularize the election by providing that all ranks of nobles—that is, all free citizens—should take part in it, he invited those extraordinary scenes of turbulence which have made the very name of the Polish diet an astonishment and a warning. The gathering was held in an open plain near Warsaw, purposely selected in a region hotly Catholic, and easily reached by a mob of petty nobles. "There were already at Warsaw," says an eye-witness, "many armed gentlemen and many lords, accompanied by a great number of their friends or vassals, who had arrived from every part of the kingdom. The plain where they had pitched their tents, and where the diet was to take place, had all the appearance of a camp. They were seen walking about with long swords at their sides, and sometimes they marched in troops, armed with pikes, muskets, arrows, and javelins. Some of them, besides the armed men whom

they brought for their guard, had even cannon, and were as if intrenched in their quarters. One might have said that they were going to a battle rather than to a diet; that it was an army for war, not a council of state; and that they were met rather to conquer a foreign kingdom than to dispose of their own. It looked quite possible that the affair would be determined rather by force of arms than by deliberation and votes."¹ A large array of fully equipped and mounted men was on the plain. In theory, any one of the voting nobility, of at least a hundred thousand, might stop the whole proceeding by insisting on his individual vote. It is to their great credit that all passed off without a single act of violence.

The candidate of the more rigid Catholics, an Austrian prince, had suddenly died; and by what in the light of history seems the strangest choice the election fell without dispute upon Henry of Valois, younger brother of the young Charles IX. of France. Polish fancy had been appealed to by the eloquent traveled dwarf, Krasowski, in favor of the "fine gentleman" from the French court, the youthful hero of Jarnac, who would surely bring with him golden days. Grim rumors of the St. Bartholomew of the year before, caught up with joy and boasting by the Jesuits, might well give the Protestants pause; but they thought to make all good by accepting Charles's assurance that this was only a matter of local police, at worst an unhappy accident. They insisted, however, on the amplest pledges for the security of French as well as of Polish Protestants. An embassy of twelve nobles went to Paris in great glory, "with coats of gold embroidery," says De Thou, "in grave majesty, like a Roman senate, their bridle-reins studded with silver, with gilded housings and costly decorations,

¹ Gratiani, the papal envoy, in Krasinski, vol. ii., p. 24.

attended by high-born youths in silken robes, carrying blazing links a yard in length" (vol. ii., p. 286).

Henry, his mother's spoiled darling, lingered while he could, both mother and son hoping that his brother's death might give him a more shining crown in Paris. At length, in February, 1574, he consented to be installed in Warsaw, and to take the solemn pledge required. But his Jesuit advisers, it was well known, had counseled him that "no faith need be kept with heretics." Once, when he seemed to hesitate in the course of the solemnity, a loud Protestant voice was heard, "Swear, or you shall not be king!" And the weak, dissolute boy did as he was bidden, intending the lie. We should hardly know to what evil depth of craft and perjury even Jesuit guile might descend if we had not, at full length, the advice given by Gratiani, conscience-keeper of the young king.¹

Before many days were past, the new reign was already discredited by its levities and extravagances. Within four months, weary of his exile, Henry heard gladly of his brother's miserable death, and fled away from a night banquet, close followed on horseback by his scandalized subjects, who pursued him as far as the frontier. Not to expose themselves a second time to like contumely, the Protestants now secured the choice of a ruler (as they believed) of their own persuasion, under the political arrangement before mentioned. A delegation of twelve, including a single Catholic, was sent to confer with Stephen Bathori, reigning prince of Transylvania, who accepted the crown on the terms they offered—marriage with the elderly

¹ In Krasinski, "Reformation in Poland" (vol. ii., pp. 35-38); also the details of Jesuit methods, taken from a Polish Catholic writer, in the same author's "Religious History of the Slavonic Nations" (pp. 189-197), with the elaborate instructions given to the Archbishop of Kioff for cajoling the Russian clergy into the Roman Church (*ibid.*, p. 201).

of Henry's great error, and a
c. He was supposed to be a Protestant—
Unitarian—of inferior rank, as she doubtless
el. A father-confessor, smuggled in by the
envoy, had gained his ear, and too easily per-
hat he should find peace at home by joining
arty. To the alarm of the other delegates,
ared dutifully at mass the next morning after
new dignity. Like Henry of Navarre, eight-
r, he professed a politic change of creed—"a
ll worth a mass,"—happily, without change
steadily upheld the legal rights of the com-
ad publicly forsaken. He was one of the
to say, the fighting, kings. A horrible bor-
Russia, forced on him by Ivan the Terrible,
ticular field of his achievement. His larger
own in his dealing with the Cossacks of the
orogian), who were of the Eastern faith;
only brought into order and subjection, but
er a discipline of arms that made them loyal
an effective guard of the frontier. The
rough about by an insolent wantonness that
nto most vindictive foes will meet us pres-
in epitaph on Stephen testifies to the ex-

more than jurist, in battle more than soldier, in friendship more than friend, in all things more than sage."

In this period we find the greatest activity among the Unitarians of Poland in establishing their faith. Their new leader, Faustus Socinus, had come to them in 1579. Though received at first with distrust, he gained their complete confidence, and at length complete ascendancy, in a long series of conferences for the fixing of their creed and discipline. Since the position taken among them at Pinczow, in 1562, when Blandrata had prevailed on them to discard creed for Scripture, they had been commonly called "Pinczovians." The town of Rakow (*Racovia*), founded in 1569 by a generous noble, Sieninski, came to be their chief headquarters, with chapel, school, printing-house, and a university established in 1602; and from this they were more widely known as the "Racovian" sect. But the great influence of Socinus has given them the permanent title "Socinian," by which alone they have a place in history. Their story is an episode in the great political tragedy now about to be displayed.

At the death of Stephen Bathori, in 1587, religious parties were again about equally divided. Each in due form now chose its own candidate to the throne. Maximilian of Austria was elected by a coalition between the papal legate and the Lutherans; while Sigismund, crown-prince of Sweden, son of Catherine Jagello, was chosen by the "national" party, prompted (it is said) by his aunt Anna, the aged widow-queen. Threatening disorders were put down by the strong, quick hand of Zamoyski, the general-in-chief, who ended the contest by taking Maximilian prisoner after a sharp battle, and Sigismund was accepted without dispute. He had been brought up nominally a Lutheran, but really, under his mother's influence, as a Catholic of the strictest creed, looking to receive the crown

... name - Jesuit - begins to show its
sastrous meaning in our story. As early as
the advance of religious liberty, an appeal
le for a missionary colony of that order in
; was strongly urged by Cardinal Hosen
elate of every ecclesiastical merit, but with
of a true citizen or an honest man; the same
l Henry of Valois to break his oath on the
that "no faith is to be kept with heretics."
eeded in founding a Jesuit establishment,
for the evil task of the eighty years that

ve warning of disaster was an armed and (it
nstitutional revolt (*Rokosh*) in 1605, break-
lin, in the south, which seems not to have
ppressed for about three years. The war
as liberty was followed up in four several
ere individual cases of suppression or per-
imes most atrocious: in 1611, for example,
lic," or treasurer, a Unitarian, John Tysco-
to swear by the crucifix and casting it to
an emblem of superstition, had his tongue
ands and feet chopped off, and was then
stake, Sigismund, it is said, consenting to

and at length the horrors of 1660; but all religious freedom eventually perished. Third, the stricter Protestant sects were enticed into consent with the policy of crushing the more liberal (as in the barbarous destruction at Rakow in 1638), till their own doom came, less than a century later, in 1733.¹ Fourth, the master-stroke of this policy was achieved by taking in hand, through court influence and all pretensions of superior skill, the training of the sons of higher families, in which office they found their chief rivals in some of the Unitarian schools.

This last was carried out with the peculiar subtlety and skill known only, in its perfection, to Jesuit seminaries. The best thing it did (as once remarked of it) was to give the Polish nobility a fluent smattering of bad Latin—an accomplishment of which they were very vain. The method, well understood if not openly avowed, was to sap the vigor of the young mind by keeping it through all its best years in a state of pupilage. To do this the more effectually, it forced upon the learner the study of a preposterously difficult Latin grammar, compiled by a Spanish monk, Alvar, so that the answer was always ready, in case a parent should think a boy fit for some manlier task: "At least let him stay till he has finished his grammar lessons"—by which time the pinched and dwarfed intelligence could be easily turned to a tool of mental tyranny. The childish understanding, along with the ferocious passion, that astonish us in later Polish story, were the fit ripe fruit of this stupid and wicked training.

Naturally, the first victims were the Unitarians, who had not even the defense there might be in a united Protestant opinion. Early in the reign of Sigismund III., in

¹ Beza had urged that Unitarians should be suppressed by the sword, after Calvin's righteous example in Geneva. Their final rejection from the Polish Protestant League was in 1598.

1594, Socinus had published the treatise on "Christ the Saviour" (*de Jesu Christo Servatore*), by which his theology is most distinctly known. Four years later was the brutal assault upon him in his sick-bed, before described (p. 67). In 1605, the year after his death, was published in Polish the first form—probably in the main his own work—of the "Racovian Catechism," which long had a certain fame as the best exponent of Socinian theology.¹

The school at Rakow went on, with a fair amount of well-earned popularity and a high repute for good learning. Under its eminent head, John Crell, it won the title of "the Sarmatian Athens." It "was frequented not only by Socinian but also by Protestant and Catholic youths; and it numbered about a thousand pupils," besides adding to the prosperity of the district by its fame as a university town. This continued for nearly forty years, its enemies waiting the hour for its destruction. At length, in the fatal year 1638, two of its students, for boyish mischief, were seen to stone a wooden crucifix set up beside the public street. The boys were duly checked and disciplined; public apology was made, with the offer of any reasonable expiation; but nothing could save the school. In spite of generous remonstrance from Protestants, from members of the Greek Church, and even from Catholics, "a decree was passed, enjoining that the Unitarian church at Rakow should be closed, the college broken up, the printing-house demolished, the ministers and professors branded as infamous, proscribed and banished from the state." The sentence was so ruthlessly carried out that the aged Sieninski, landlord of the territory and founder of the town, was accused by his own son, greedy of the inheritance, and

¹ An edition in Latin, in 1609, gave it wide currency. Attempts were made in England to suppress it in 1614 and in 1651. A very handsome English version, edited by Thomas Rees, with a valuable historical introduction, was published in London in 1818, by Longman & Co.

only "escaped the severity exercised against his fellow-religionists by taking an oath that he was innocent of the crime committed against a wooden cross by two school-boys."

This atrocious act led to further consequences. Besides its crushing direct injury, "it gave encouragement to the provincial tribunals in every part of the kingdom to persecute with the utmost severity all who openly professed antitrinitarian sentiments, and to prevent the unfortunate exiles from Rakow from obtaining a secure and peaceable asylum in other places." This, too, in the reign of the comparatively manly and just Ladislas, elder son of Sigismund.

Before the end of his reign came, the awful retribution began¹—an uprising of the Cossacks in 1647, led by Hmelnitski,² a chief of extraordinary craft and power, whose wife had been abducted and afterwards murdered in pure wantonness by a Polish governor. This horrible revolt desolated the entire south of Poland, bringing ruin and destruction especially upon the Unitarian communities, which were most numerous and prosperous there. This misery was checked for a time by a treaty that promised the Cossacks certain political rights, particularly that of being represented in the senate by their ecclesiastical chief, a dignitary of the Eastern Church. But when he came to present himself, the Catholic senators by common consent turned their backs and left the hall in a body, disdainingly to sit with a schismatic. Stung by the insult, the Cossacks broke into a revolt more terrible than before, leading on a prodigious horde of Tartars as allies.

¹ How awful, let those who will see in the two wonderfully powerful and impressive tales by Sienkiewicz, "With Fire and Sword" and "The Deluge" (Boston, Little, Brown & Co.). The author writes, apparently, from the point of view of a fanatic Romanist: at least, that is the phase of feeling the narrative reflects; but it exhibits, with terrible fidelity, the crimes of insolence, lawlessness, and violence among the Polish nobility, which brought the downfall of the commonwealth.

² In Polish, *Chmielnicki*.

arms of their fellow-reigionists of Russia, the eastern half of Poland, including Lithuania, and the hands of those merciless assailants. Just then the death of John Casimir had prompted him to put an end to Sweden, renounced by his father fifty years ago, and in a few months his cousin Charles Gustav, a warrior in temper, like his grandson Charles XII, without dispute whatever of Poland Cossack, Russian had spared. John Casimir, an exile in himself under the special protection of the Swedish king, knowing that, if restored to his kingdom, he would have to atone the wrongs of the peasants and "purify the land."

For the fulfillment of his oath, Charles Gustav, who was master of Poland in fact, now refused to be made its king by law. His sword, however, was the only title he chose to hold it by. The Swedes, who had accepted him, made a confederacy of nobles and native prince. The Swedish troops, hard-fought in the Thirty Years' War, had outraged the peasantry by plunder, massacre, and cutting off their crops. A tempest of fanatical reaction set in. Lorded hands to sweep the invader out of the land. By the help of the Protestant "Great Elector,"

eign state once more. And in 1658 the time was come for John Casimir to execute his vow.

The decree in which he did it is by far the most important public document that has ever touched the destinies of the Unitarian body; and, as such, the substance of it is copied here:¹ "Although our law hath ever forbidden the Arian sect to subsist and spread in our dominions, yet since, by some fatal chance of the Commonwealth, the said sect hath for no long time begun to expand as well within our realm as in the grand duchy of Lithuania, denying the fore-eternity of the Son of God; We therefore, reaffirming and leaving in full rigor against them the statute [afore-said], have ordained as follows: That if any such shall be found, who shall have dared or shall attempt within our said dominions to confess, propagate, or preach the afore-said doctrine, or to protect and cherish it and its upholders, and shall be lawfully convicted of the same, every such person shall be liable to be without delay capitally punished by our magistrates, by their own authority, under penalty of loss of office." A respite of three years was granted for the sale of estates and collection of debts.

With superfluous cruelty, the three years' term was suddenly cut short, without notice, at the end of two years, and those who held to their faith must leave at once, mostly beggared and stripped. One of the fine traditions of the Polish Brethren speaks of the noble plea made at Cracow, in 1660, by Andrew Wyszowaty, grandson of Socinus's only child, who stood alone before the diet in defense of the banished brotherhood. From an appeal made

¹ It is said that there was doubt for a time whether the victims of it should be Socinians or Jews; the Jews, however, though worse misbelievers, were more profitable subjects. Besides, the great house of Radzivil, second in the kingdom and chief protector of the Unitarians, had consented, under the double tempest of invasion, to put Lithuania under protection of the Swedes—a deadly affront to the king.

to the Great Elector by Samuel Przypkowski, while these wrongs were still fresh and bleeding, the following words are taken: "Upon the shore where we were cast beats a most cruel tempest and storm of ills—continual wasting by the enemy, continual assault of troops, frequent gathering of armies, bitter hate and strifes between kings and nobles, poverty of all ranks, a plague of debased coinage, which drains the sap and very life-blood from the body of the kingdom, filling it with dropsy, civil war, and the heaping up of every evil, and, which is worst of all, no comfort of hope, but worse apprehension of the future. How base and pitiful it is, that so many noble men and women, widows and orphans, driven from their native land, many of them stripped of wealth and great estates, who once gave largely in charity to others, now need not others' help alone, but their pity; and are in peril of new and even worse persecution, since they no longer have the strength to bear up under it. Tossed by so many waves and storms, suffering every form of dread and horror, we are thrust off from the hospitality even of the sand, yes, the bleak and barren sand. Because we are beginning to till laboriously these sterile and desert spots, and to restore the scorched and broken ruins of the towns, what harm or loss shall we be charged with bringing upon the regions to which we have fled for refuge? Is it for this we have deserved to be vexed with threats and edicts, or cast forth to the insolent barbarity of the mob?"¹

The exile of the Polish Brethren was even more cruel than the tragedy which twenty-five years later took place, on a far larger scale, in the expulsion of the Huguenots from France. These had at least the sympathy and the protection of a vast body of co-religionists, the hospitality of neighboring England further prompted by commercial

¹ "Apologia Afflictorum Innocentiarum" (1666).

rivalry, or the welcome of many among them to the new colonies of America; but, for our poor heretics, counted at most by tens and not by hundreds of thousands, the narrow integrity of conscience, which was their one heroic virtue, cut them off from the fellow-feeling of Catholic and Protestant alike. Some found generous welcome over the border, in Transylvania. Some, by the queen's bounty, were settled in Silesia. Some sought refuge in Holland, still famous for its splendid defense of religious independence; but here they were received churlishly and grudgingly, out of old Anabaptist memories, and were pushed back, as far as might be, to the less inhospitable regions farther east. Their last appeal, which we have listened to, gained them generous reception in Brandenburg and Prussia; and here we may consider to have been the home of such poor remnants as still clung to the old name and brotherhood. In 1730 eleven families of them still survived. As late as 1838, in answer to a friendly letter of inquiry, two old men—by name Morseten and Schlichting—were reported as still living in eastern Prussia, who called themselves Socinians. With them, we may suppose, passed away the last fragment of what, for one eventful century, had borne honorable part in the brilliant commonwealth of Poland.

Bayle, writing about 1690, when the story of their exile was still fresh, makes the following comment: "There are few who are not persuaded that it [the Unitarian opinion] has extended in obscurity, and spread more widely day by day; and it is thought that, as things now are, Europe would be soon surprised at finding itself Socinian if powerful princes should embrace this heresy, or if they should only enact that its profession should be relieved of the temporal disabilities it labors under. This is the opinion of many persons; and the opinion perplexes and alarms

a deep impression upon a time of excessive
virulent controversy. These men were hon-
orous, faithful to their light. They deserve
of honor—no small share. But their thin
not backed by any large intelligent criticism,
h from meeting the deeper claims of the relig-
e have seen how their narrow interpretation,
ible pedantry, held them from the broader
e more vigorous life that lay within their

ious defeat has its reasons, which should be
tory. Socinus began by breaking rather vio-
re bolder and equally pious rationalism of his
in Transylvania. His Polish adherents de-
ope of religious union (if such a thing were
ncessantly pressing the minute points of like-
its of difference, that lay between them and
ox Reformers. It was the same to the last.
c and eloquent appeal of Przytkowski, just
mediately followed by a formal argument to
he nobility of a true religious freedom, but
inian creed was, after all, not so *very* heretical ;
so heretical, in fact, as some with which it had
inded, particularly the "Judaizing" opinions
David and his like. These are melancholy
But then, as we recollect, the weaknesses

The Polish Brethren must needs prove the accuracy of their opinion, not content with simple honesty of thought.

The Socinian opinion as to controverted points of doctrine has been sufficiently shown elsewhere. Its masterpiece of exposition, the "Racovian Catechism," well deserves the reputation it gained. Wholly apart from the value of its theology, the form of its argument gives it an educational value distinctly superior to that of any similar work of the school to which it is nearest allied. Its bits of exegesis, turning on the exact meaning of Scripture terms, are often vivid and suggestive. Its treatment of practical ethics, in the light of Bible precepts, is singularly wise and clear: take, for example, the topic of Usury (p. 237), so often treated by religionists with mere ignorant tirade; while the breadth of plan and the logical method and completeness—beginning with the true value of the Scriptures, and ending by an answer to the question, What is the Invisible Church of Christ?—make it, to this day, a treatise well worth study. The well-taught, sober, rational, and devout Unitarianism, which accepted this for a century or more as its best manual of faith, held to it by a wise and fortunate choice. It cannot be said to have been really superseded until the coming in of that revolution in religious thought implied in what we call "the higher criticism" of our own day.

The Socinians have been thus generously judged by Archbishop Tillotson, an opponent of their theology, who wrote, about 1690: "I must own that generally they are a pattern of the fair way of disputing and of debating matters of religion, without heat and unseemly reflections upon their adversaries. They generally argue matters with that temper and gravity, with that freedom from passion and transport, which becomes a serious and weighty argument; and for the most part they reason closely and

clearly, with extraordinary guard and caution, with great dexterity and decency, and yet with smartness and subtlety enough, with a very gentle heat, and few hard words—virtues to be praised wherever they are found: yea, even in an enemy, and very worthy our imitation. In a word, they are the strongest managers of a weak cause, and which is ill-founded at the bottom, that perhaps ever yet meddled with controversy. Insomuch that some of the Protestant and the generality of the popish writers, and even of the Jesuits themselves, who pretend to all the reason and subtlety in the world, are in comparison of them but mere scolds and bunglers. Upon the whole matter they have but one, this great, defect, that they want a good cause and truth on their side, which if they had, they have reason and wit and temper to defend it.”¹

¹ Quoted by Krasinski, vol. ii., p. 407.

CHAPTER V.

TRANSYLVANIA.

THE oldest existing group of Unitarian churches is that in Transylvania, the extreme easterly portion of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Its history as an organized body dates from 1568, when the Unitarian belief was formally recognized as one of the four legal "religions" of that province—the Catholic, Lutheran, Reformed (Calvinist), and Unitarian, whose constitutional rights were reaffirmed at Presburg in 1848. A royal charter, dated 1571, gave to it corporate rights which no political changes have succeeded in annulling; though the attempt has been made, often with excessive cruelty and injustice, here as elsewhere. Its survival has been due partly to the nature of the country and the circumstances of its history, but chiefly to the singular qualities of the unconquerable race of men that hold it. A few words must first be said, accordingly, of the land and people.¹

Transylvania is the blunt wedge of rugged country, in outline not unlike a ram's head, abutting upon the old frontier of Turkey, now Roumania. It covers some sixteen thousand square miles, being not quite half as large as the

¹ In this sketch I avail myself of some recollections of a visit to Transylvania in 1881, as delegate to the "Supreme Consistory" held at Klausenburg (Kolozsvár). My chief authorities, besides, are the monograph of Professor Rath, "Siebenbürgen" (Heidelberg, 1880); an historical sketch by József Ferencz, found in the "Kleiner Unitarier Spiegel" (Vienna, 1879); narratives of English visitors, Paget, Tayler, Chalmers, and Gordon; that of A. Coquerel *fil.*, in the "Revue Politique et Littéraire" (November, 1873); a review by P. Hunfalvy of Alexis Jakab's "Life of Francis David" (Budapest, 1880); and the personal aid kindly given me by my friends Prof. George Boros, of Kolozsvár, and Mr. John Fretwell.

State of Maine. Its population is something over two millions, extremely mixed and diverse: less than one third are Hungarian, or Magyar; considerably more than half are Roumanian or Wallach; the rest being made up of Germans, Gypsies, Armenians, and Jews. It is guarded on the north, east, and south by the great mountain masses of the Carpathians, which rise steep from the vast levels that spread eastward into Asia. On the west it is sharply divided from the broad Hungarian plain by a very abrupt and rocky boundary of hills—the *Király-hag*, or "King's Fence." It thus stands out boldly upon the map as a great natural fortress or bastion. It was, in fact, for more than a thousand years the chief bulwark of southeastern Europe against invasions always threatening from the East. In the fifteenth century the genius of its greatest national hero, John Hunniades (*Hunyádi János*), seconded by the half-fabulous exploits of Scanderbeg in Albania, seems alone to have saved the German Empire from the fate of Constantinople. And that great terror lasted into, and more than a century beyond, the time of Luther.

The "seven cardinal sins" of Transylvania, which have greatly perplexed its history, are said to be its Three Nations and its Four Religions. The four chartered religions are, as we have seen, the Catholic, Lutheran, Calvinist, and Unitarian. The "three nations" are: (1) the Szeklers ("frontiersmen"), who also call themselves Attilans, claiming to be descended from a portion of the vast troop of Attila the Hun, which fell back from the battle of Châlons in 451, and has held this land ever since; (2) those who in distinction from the Szeklers are called Magyars, being of the same race and tongue, but left, after a second Hunnish invasion, early in the tenth century,¹ in possession of the

¹ Of which curious incidents are found in Scheffel's "Ekkehart," with his authorities in Pertz's "Monumenta Germanica," vol. ii., pp. 104-107.

land to which they gave the name Hungary: they accepted Christianity under Duke Geisa, father of their king St. Stephen, some time before the year 1000; (3) something over 200,000 Germans, here called Saxons, colonized from lower Germany in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, to strengthen the defenses against invasion and fill up great voids left by incessant attack and spoliation, especially the horrid Tartar inroad of 1241: these are represented as a sturdy and valiant people, of thrift somewhat sordid and holdfast, hating change, Lutheran almost to a man. Singularly true to the language and customs of their forefathers, their very local costumes and popular songs are said to be the same that may be found to-day in their distant fatherland. They have given its German name, *Siebenbürgen* ("Seven Fortresses"), to the land in which they dwell in a certain seclusion, a sort of secularized Covenanters. Some have joined the Unitarians, but in doing it have had to renounce their native tongue as well as creed. The impracticable Magyar is the vernacular of the Unitarian confession; and that church was itself at one time known simply as "Hungarian."

These "three nations" do not however include all, or even half, the population of Transylvania. In fact, since the political equality decreed by the Hungarian Diet in 1848, they have ceased practically to exist. A considerable majority consists of Wallachians or Wallachs,—that is, "Strangers," who call themselves "Roumans," who claim to be descended from the Dacian colonists that retreated before the Goths across the Danube in 272, and who cherish dreams of a Daco-Roumanian sovereignty to lord it some day over their old masters and oppressors the Hungarians. To the eye they make a picturesque but abject peasantry, skilled only in the ruder tasks, addicted to servile superstitions, and guilty of horrible atrocities in several

insurrections, the latest being that prompted by Austrian intrigues in 1848.¹ In religion they hold to a debased form of the Eastern ritual, those who (under pressure from Maria Theresa) acknowledge the pope as spiritual sovereign being of a "received" religion, while the rest remain "schismatic." Their priests, some of whom are men of high intelligence, are greatly dreaded as secret agents of Russian policy, thus further embittering and complicating old jealousies of race. And to this we may add that, while the Magyars are nearly stationary and the Saxons are dwindling in population, the Wallachs rapidly increase, both by immigration and (spite of their extreme poverty) by their kindly and easy-going family life.²

In numbers, then, those of Magyar blood and speech are hardly more than one fourth of the inhabitants of Transylvania. But they are, as any one who has met an assemblage of them will quickly recognize, natural leaders and rulers of men—sturdy, intelligent, grave, solid, masterful; a race that could not fail to lead and command, as they have done, among feebler or less resolute populations. Recklessly brave, they stood in front of the great battle that for a thousand years had to be fought for the security of western Christendom. They might be nearly exterminated; again and again they have been cut down to a mere fragment. Incessantly reduced in numbers, the race has maintained itself by a resolute, haughty, and exclusive temper, strikingly relieved against a frankness of manner

¹ Of this the Hungarian novelist Jokai has given several powerful pictures, the completest being in a Transylvanian romance, "*Die nur einmal lieben*," and the most tragic in "*Hungarian Sketches*," the story entitled "*The Bardy Family*" (English translation, Edinburgh, 1864).

² In Paget's "*Hungary and Transylvania*" (London, 1839) are most striking illustrations of the above. Mrs. Gerard's "*Land beyond the Forest*" gives the best pictures we have of the Saxons and Wallachs, but her brief chapter on the Unitarian Magyars is little better than an ignorant or wanton libel. For the political relations of the races, see Szemere's "*Hungary from 1848 to 1860*" (*Letters to Cobden*), London, Bentley.

and simple habit of life equally characteristic. On occasion, that haughty temper can be driven to acts of extreme cruelty and contempt, of which shocking examples are told by friendly narrators.¹ But their ordinary conduct towards dependent populations would seem to have been magnanimous and kindly—especially as seen in their almost romantic declaration of rights in 1848. Such outbreaks of vengeance, or race-feud, as we have been told of we may easily understand, and perhaps pardon, when we remember our own dealings with Negroes, Indians, or Chinese. The terrible uprising of the autumn of 1848—when “Wallachs burned the women and spitted the children of the Magyars, and these revenged themselves by destroying the Wallachian villages from the very face of the land”²—was stimulated by the base policy of Austria working through the jealousy of Croatian Slavs; for the rural aristocracy of the Szeklers, who were its special victims, made the backbone of the short-lived Republic of that date.³ They accept, however, very heartily their position in the double empire since 1867. They would, we are told, die readily for Franz Josef, the King of Hungary, while they might resist to the death his acts as Emperor of Austria. I was told more than once, gratefully, of the tears shed by the Austrian empress at the death of their patriot statesman Deák. We may expect to see something of the same temper now described in their defense of that particular form of belief which had come to them as their own share in the great inheritance of the Protestant Reformation. The story is worth the telling, not simply for the historical importance of the movement

¹ As in Paget, vol. ii., p. 109 (of date 1523); Rath, p. 157 (of 1781).

² Brace's "Hungary in 1851," p. 165.

³ Members of the consistory at Kolozsvar had been leaders in the revolution of 1848; and my most kind entertainer at Budapest, the historian Alexis Jakab, had been an officer of Kossuth's cavalry in twenty-three engagements.

nsylvania, partly through the agency of Calvinian, George Blandrata, who had come over in 1563 at the summons of Queen Isabella, great influence upon her son, John Sigismund, of the Reformation there. We have seen work was carried still further forward by the great preacher and first bishop¹ of the Unitarian Church, Francis David; how this body, in 1568, obtained legal rights, which it has kept to this day; years later, Francis David was condemned in doctrine, under a charge basely pressed by Blandrata, and was cast into prison, where he died in November, 1579. It is now necessary to set forth with something of their antecedents and clearer light of history.

The period with which this history has most to do covers hundred and sixty years. It is defined by the great battles at Mohács, in western Hungary, one the advance and the other the retreat of power. These dates are 1526 and 1687. At the latter date the Turks became masters of nearly all Hungary, held under a sort of protectorate, with their capital at Buda (now the older half of the modern city) which marks the western limit of their sway. At the latter date, having already been driven back by Sobieski, they suffered from the siege of Vienna, they suf-

lost their hold upon the upper valley of the Danube. The same event that had made them masters of this region also gave to Transylvania its century and a half of free political life—free, except as it might appeal to either court, Christian or Moslem, against the other, and so be driven (as Bishop Ferencz illustrates) like a tennis-ball between Constantinople and Vienna.

At the battle in 1526 the young and rash Ludwig II.,¹ the last Jagello king of Hungary, had perished in a marsh. His successor laid claim to Transylvania, but was resisted by the Magyars as a stranger, who could not even take his coronation oath in their own tongue. They chose, instead, a typical chief of their own blood, John Zapolya,² appealing to the Turks against the Germans. From this time on we have a series of fourteen quasi-independent sovereigns, now known as kings, oftener as princes, sometimes as *voivodes*, or governors-general under foreign rule. This term of qualified independence, it will be noticed, covers almost exactly what is called the "Reformation period" in modern history.

The story of the Reformation in Transylvania begins with John Zapolya (1526–40). In 1529 a decree of exile was pronounced against Catholics, probably as upholders of the Austrian policy against him. In the next year Kronstadt, the chief "Saxon" city, declared for the Lutheran faith; and this example was followed, ten years later, by Klausenburg (Kolozsvár), the Magyar capital. At this latter date (1540) Unitarians were already to be found in Transylvanian churches, along with followers of Luther and of Zwingli. Allying his name with the glory

¹ Whom Carlyle calls the "skinless" (*ohne Haut*), from a physical delicacy.

² Apparently he had been the leader in suppressing a horrible six months' Slavic insurrection, which was horribly avenged, as related by Paget, "Hungary and Transylvania," vol. ii., p. 109.

of the elder reigning house, Zapolya married Isabella Jagello, daughter of Sigismund the Great of Poland;¹ and at his death, in 1540, she became regent to their infant son, John Sigismund, who was proclaimed by the Magyar nobles as prince, with Turkish support against Ferdinand of Austria.²

It was Isabella who in 1563 invited from Poland the well-known Unitarian propagandist, George Blandrata, whom a Catholic writer describes as "that scoundrel doctor, Blandrata of Saluzzo, chief of the Huguenot sect!" Isabella appears to have steadily befriended the most radical leaders of the Reformation; and her counsels must have done much to form the character of the young prince, the one hero-sovereign of history who has frankly borne the name of Unitarian. This unique position of John Sigismund makes the more interesting the following account of his person and character, taken from a report addressed by a Catholic envoy to Cosmo, Duke of Florence: "His look is kind and friendly, out of blue eyes. He is an accomplished cavalier, skilled with the lance, a master of wrestling, fencing, the bow, and the lute. He can express himself well in Latin, and speaks fluently Italian, German, Polish, Hungarian, Wallach, with some Greek and Turkish. Kind-hearted, mild-tempered, generous, high-spirited, shrewd, well-balanced, eager, brave, valiant in war, he will be wherever danger is greatest; by day and night in the saddle; so faithful in service that he must be restrained from throwing himself away. He is pious in disposition, earnest in the search for truth; slow to inflict punishment of crimes; hates a hypocrite; is in all respects virtuous and pure."³

¹ See above, pp. 83, 84.

² At this time, according to Mr. Fretwell, was formed the League (virtually a Protestant league) of the "three nations," Szekler, Magyar, and Saxon.

³ Rath, "Siebenbürgen," p. 136.

The conspicuous glory of John Sigismund's reign was to establish in 1568 a religious peace among the warring sects on the basis of perfect liberty of conscience. Before his death, three years later, at the age of thirty-two, he had confirmed the charter of constitutional rights, by which the "four religions" abide to-day. When once, as a boy of twelve, he had been dethroned by an Austrian conspiracy, he was restored by Turkish help; and the same year that gave the charter of religious freedom also renewed and confirmed the Turkish alliance. It is likely that this obligation of good-will, with dread of the Jesuits (who are found in western Hungary as early as 1561), did something to strengthen his hate of Christian bigotry, and his resolve to compel equal justice among Christian sects.

The story of the Reformation in these bright early days, so far as touches our present subject, is summed up in the life of its one chief religious hero, witness, and martyr, Francis David.¹ The capital city, Klausenburg, was at that day almost equally divided among the "three nations." David was himself, by the common account, of German family, though using with equal fluency both Latin and the Magyar speech, which then became dominant there; his family name he spelled, in scholar's fashion, "Davidis" (= Davidson). He was born about 1510; and it was probably the narrow means of his father, a shoemaker by trade, that kept a man of his remarkable gifts from a public career till so late in life; for it appears to have been when he was already thirty-eight that he was sent by his Catholic instructors—men certainly of singular liberality—to complete his college training by three years at Wittenberg. Luther had been two years dead, and

¹ For many details of this account I am indebted to a biographical sketch sent me by my friend and host, Prof. George Boros, of Kolozsvár, whose manuscript may be found in the Harvard Divinity School library.

it must have been Melanchthon's influence that held David from plunging too hastily into the path of reform, while his studies in Wittenberg would predispose him to that course. After his return, in 1551, he served two years in the modest post of a country schoolmaster or curate. When his vocation as preacher became apparent, he was of that liberal wing of the Catholic clergy who resolved, while remaining in their mother-church, to preach only the truth of Christ as they might honestly find it in the gospel. Coming to be well known as an effective speaker to the learned and the people, to each in their own tongue, he was in 1556 established as a metropolitan preacher in Klausenburg. It is here, at the age of forty-six, that his career properly begins.

He was already identified in the popular mind with the Lutheran party, whether or not a seceder as yet from the Church of Rome. With his growing repute as a pulpit orator, he became more independent and bold in asserting the claim of reason in religion. The German part of the population was, as a rule, Lutheran; the Magyar, well inclined to take a step beyond, held the Genevan view. The critical point just then was the doctrine of sacraments; and with sore reluctance David found himself obliged to part company with his former associates, on Luther's assertion of the Real Presence in the Eucharist. Just here, too, John Sigismund, now a youth under twenty, came forward in support of the new advance. But the genius of the people itself was a still more effectual aid than the prince's favor. The Hungarians, as we have seen, were never ardently loyal to Catholic ascendancy. Besides, as they themselves declare, the Magyar turn of thought is of nearer kin to central Asia than to Greece or Germany. It does not take kindly to such mysteries as trinity, atonement, or the like. It likes to rationalize, they say, and

inclines easily to simpler forms of faith. Thus the Reform, at its headquarters in Klausenburg, went steadily in the direction taken by its most eloquent preacher. The Town Council gave him, too, its official support. For some years (1559-66) he labored chiefly in the work of education, seeing clearly that the task he had begun must be given soon to younger hands: thus we find him not only court preacher, but head of what is at this day the most important university of Transylvania. The influence of Blaudrata and of the prince's mother, Isabella, worked meanwhile powerfully for the new and free theology he taught. His final position seems to have been first distinctly taken in 1566, in the course of a discussion he was led into with one of the university professors, Peter Karolyi, who expounded the trinity in Melancthon's sense. From this time forth David's Unitarian conviction is openly declared through pulpit and press, while "the attitude of Kolozsvár and of all Transylvania is changed" with him.

The year 1568 carried his success and his personal eminence to their highest point. In January a royal edict confirmed by authority of the diet was published, of liberality hitherto unknown in the religious world. It declared absolute freedom of conscience and of speech; no preacher should be subject to penalty from an ecclesiastical superior for speaking his honest thought; no congregation should be debarred from listening to the preacher of its choice; no man should suffer civil penalty for his opinion, "since faith is the gift of God, and faith comes by hearing, and the hearing is of the Word of God." This law became the substance of those constitutional liberties granted to the "four religions," which have continued down to our day. ^{little later} At this date the name "Unitarian" was well recognized as that of the now dominant faith—before this, known as "the Klausenburg Confession"—which remained for more

than fifty years the prevailing type of the Reformed belief. It is an honorable distinction that this first and only Unitarian triumph in the policy of a sovereign state declared not the supremacy of its own belief, but the equal liberty of all.

Two months later was held a public debate, in Latin, lasting ten days, at the residence and in presence of the prince, who listened attentively to the proceedings. Five disputants spoke on each side, David's chief opponent being Peter Melius, a Calvinist "bishop" summoned from Hungary, a zealous defender of the trinity. "This was the first great open controversy" between the parties; and, in the opinion of those who listened, it resulted in "a complete victory of the Unitarian doctrine." David carried with him the full sympathy of "all the nobility assembled there," as well as the enthusiastic support of his townspeople. "The whole town was greatly stirred during the time of the debate; but now, when they heard of the result, their joy was boundless. The streets of Kolozsvár were filled with hundreds and thousands of people, anxiously questioning one another of the latest news. Could they have heard tidings more delightful than that their pastor, long so greatly loved, from this time forth their bishop, was to return that very day? The long-expected carriage arrived at last, and was halted in the great open square. Francis David, in order to make himself seen and heard, got up on a large round stone which stood at a corner of the street.¹ Here he began to preach the victorious new doctrine of Unitarianism. The people broke out in shouts, took him upon their shoulders, and carried him to the Church of St. Michael in the midst of the town, where he continued his address. This day the whole

¹ The great boulder is still kept in the college precincts as a proud memorial of this event.

people of the town of Kolozsvar became Unitarian! The example was followed by a large number of Transylvanian towns, each of which carried with it the entire neighborhood. At this time more than four hundred preachers [425 congregations] were Unitarian by profession. In thirteen higher schools and colleges, besides, that doctrine was taught by able professors, several of whom were refugees from foreign lands."¹

Another debate was held in October of the next year, in Hungary, and in the Magyar tongue. It lasted six days, and was attended by a large crowd, including the prince, who often interposed with his own remarks. On the last day, as the discussion seemed to grow personal and futile, he closed it with these characteristic words: "Being appointed by the grace of God prince of this land, we have designed, according to our royal office, to care for the souls of our subjects as well as for their bodies, that they may grow in the truth and be free from antichristian error. We wish, also, to show the falsehood of the name *Turks*, by which we are called in foreign countries. But we see that the party opposed make only indecisive and evasive answers. If they desire a public discussion with our preacher, Francis David, they may dispute when and where they will in our own country. We shall always cause our preacher to present himself, and they may come freely, without harm. But now, since they go about the truth, giving no direct reply, and since other public duties call us back to Transylvania, we put an end to the debate."

John Sigismund lived to complete his work by the great charter of religious freedom, announced in 1571, dying on the 14th of May in that year, without an heir to his title.

¹ From the account by Professor Boros. Among the refugees was James Paleologus, a native Greek of Chios, who was burned for heresy at Rome in 1585. He sided ardently with Francis David in his discussion with Socinus.

A change soon came in the fortunes of the Unitarian Church. Two candidates for the vacant throne appeared: Gaspar Bekes, of Wallachian blood but Unitarian in faith, who was supported by the Szeklers; and Stephen Bathori, best known for his great fighting quality. The latter was victorious, by Turkish help, in a sharp battle; and Bekes fled to Poland, his partisans suffering death or confiscation of their estates.

Stephen Bathori is generally called a Catholic,¹ though he was understood to be a Protestant by the Poles when, four years later, they elected him as their king. Probably his religion was that of a soldier, disdainful of creeds, choosing only on public grounds to ally himself with the strongest. His four years' rule was upright and just, scrupulous to protect established rights. The Unitarian body, though weakened by its great loss, seems during his time to have had nothing in the acts of the government to complain of. His own declaration was, *Rex sum populorum, non conscientiarum*. "God," said he, "has reserved to himself three things: to create something out of nothing, to know the future, and to rule the conscience."

His brother Christopher, who succeeded him from 1575 to 1581, was soon found to be more or less openly under Jesuit control. His policy, we are told, was to weaken the Protestants by fomenting dissensions among them. In 1579 he gave over to the Jesuits one of the chief Unitarian schools (that at Gyulafejervar); and "he only waited the opportunity to give Unitarianism its death-blow." The opportunity was offered in a difference that grew into personal bitterness between its two most conspicuous leaders. This difference is said by one account to have arisen as early as 1574 from some scandal (vaguely referred to as *scelus Italicum*) touching the morals of Blandrata. The

¹ See the note on p. 84, above.

open ground of it was "innovation of doctrine" charged against David. It would seem that Blandrata had kept his place and something of his influence as court physician; and he would naturally feel, or affect, a jealousy at what-ever might risk the fortunes of the body he was one of the chief founders of. At least, he showed marks of a real and even generous concern for its interest, when he was at so much pains and personal cost to prevent the difference coming to an open breach by procuring the mediation of Faustus Socinus, the highest in repute among Unitarian scholars of that day.

He had not measured the moral quality of the man he had to do with,—a man swift, bold, confident in asserting his opinion, not hesitating at any open step his new conviction might demand. At forty-six we found him still a Catholic, with Lutheran sympathies he never attempted to disguise; at fifty-six, in the ranks of the more advanced Genevan party; not till two years later, defined in his position as a Unitarian. Following the same path a little farther, we now find him, at sixty-eight, denying that cardinal doctrine of the most advanced theology as yet known, that Divine honors are to be ascribed, and prayer is to be addressed, to Christ, as—since his resurrection and ascension into glory—a real though subordinate deity. We have seen, in the story of the Polish Socinians, how tenaciously they held to this article of faith, and how they appealed to it as their ground of Christian consideration in the dreary tragedy of their dispersion. To renounce it was in their eyes a "Judaizing" apostasy. And we have not to wonder if there was now, among the Unitarians of Transylvania, sincere difference of opinion, with a genuine dread of losing all they had gained if only they should take this one further doubtful step.

To this sentiment, or apprehension, Blandrata now ap-

pealed. As to his personal motive in so doing, two things lie against him. Of the eighteen articles drawn up to exhibit David's position,¹ Blandrata is accused of having forged the most offensive one, that which denies the superhuman birth of Jesus. Further, about this time, for some service or favor unknown, he accepted from the prince the grant of three villages, largely increasing his coveted wealth. All that Christopher Bathori would engage to do, perhaps all that could fairly be expected of him, was to protect the Unitarians in that body of doctrine which they held and taught when their charter was given them. The demand of the more orthodox, that Francis David should be put to death for heresy, he disdained and refused. The question was left to what might seem a fair tribunal, one in which Unitarian theologians made a part. It turned upon a single point: Was Francis David guilty of innovation of doctrine? We are surprised to find that only one preacher of his own communion, together with all of the lay nobility, had the conviction or the courage to vote him innocent. The formal condemnation and the sentence lay with the prince, who adjudged him to be confined for life—strictly, but with some alleviation of mercy, such as the company of his daughter and the attendance of a son. The sentence was passed on the 2d of June. Five months later, November 7, 1579, he died in a dungeon of the castle at Deva, in his seventieth year.

This event had two marked effects on the Unitarian development. First, those few churches in Hungary proper in nearest sympathy with it now ceased to avow that sympathy, and in the course of a century had died out under the pressure of Austrian centralism, to be revived in part not till our day.² Second, the free intellectual develop-

¹ Compare p. 64 (above), with note.

² The district about the town of Pecs, in western Hungary, was for some

ment, on which the inner growth depends, was blighted or dwarfed. Unitarianism could subsist, under the new conditions, only as a conservative sect: a career, it might be, useful and even honorable, but without glory, and making no new advances. Its right of holding synods had already, in 1577, been limited to the two cities of Klausenburg and Thorda; and the liberty of making proselytes, accorded to other Protestant persuasions, was denied to this.

As a conservative sect, however, it now had a period of fair prosperity, lasting about forty years. The worship of Christ was formally embodied in its established ritual, and the neglected rite of baptism was generally revived. An efficient and wise successor to the bishopric was appointed, Demetrius Hunyadi, who served nine years (1579-88). He was followed by George Enyedi, a valiant champion of the faith, who did not shrink, in public address, to "scourge" the vacillating Sigismund, last of the three Bathoris, who was forced in 1597 into alliance with the Turks. For a moment the hopes of the Unitarian body were revived under the heroic Moses Szekely, a man of their own faith, who with the greater part of the Magyar nobles fell in battle near Kronstadt in 1603, fighting hopelessly against the Turks aided by "the *voivode* of Wallachia with his wild hordes."¹ At this disastrous period "the house of Hapsburg carried war into the country. The general, Basta, burned the Protestant clergy on a pile constituted of their own books. Nay, in his barbarity, he even flayed some of them alive; and, with the aid of a fanatical priesthood, he brought Transylvania to such a

time a place of refuge for their more liberal congregations. It is worthy of notice that, since the late revival, six Unitarian churches are already gathered in that district.

¹ A monument in memory of the dreadful slaughter bears the inscription:

"*Quos genuit cives hic Transylvania condit.
Hec! parvo tumulto quanta ruina jacet!*"

terrible famine, that even human corpses were not safe before the gnawing hunger. Can we wonder," says Mr. Fretwell, the generous and eloquent champion of the Hungarian cause, "that the Calvinist prince of Transylvania, Stephen Bocskai, called in the aid of Mohammedans to defend Hungary against men who blasphemed the name of the Christian's God by associating it with such villainies? And can we wonder that the Turk despised the Christians, who forgot their common danger in sectarian animosities?"

For a time, under Bocskai (1604-06), came a fresh revival of hope. The churches taken from the Unitarians in Klausenburg were restored. The Jesuits were expelled. A reign of liberty was promised, and again the afflicted church might seem well able to hold its ground, but for the dissension sprung upon them from a new fanaticism. As far back as 1588, one Andreas Osz, a land-holder of some consequence, seeking comfort from the Bible in sorrow for the loss of his three sons, came to be possessed with the opinion that the true Sabbath must be kept on Saturday. This harmless craze, as it might seem, had tragic consequences. The little sect that followed him included some among the Unitarian Szeklers; and the whole body were perversely made to suffer for it. The famous Bethlen Gabor (Gabriel Bethlehem), champion of the Protestants in Bohemia early in the Thirty Years' War, was prince of Transylvania from 1613 to 1630: a man of astonishing fighting resource and vigor, who attempted in the south of Germany what Gustavus Adolphus just after him effected in the north; of the hard type of the narrow religious partisan; a bitter Calvinist, who aimed to make the Protestant force a unit, and thus irresistible. He undertook to suppress the new religious disorder.

Under a decree called the *Simultaneum*, sanctioned by a synod in 1618, permitting different sects to occupy in common the same house of worship, he made inquisition among the Unitarians, and found pretext to transfer sixty-two of their churches to the Calvinists. He raided their country with three hundred troopers headed by an orthodox bishop, making show of chastising the Sabbatarians; and so, in his own fashion, he forced a religious peace. After the death of Gabor the fanaticism was renewed under an able leader, Simon Pecsí, once a tutor of Oszi's boys, and by him made his heir. Pecsí had been employed by Gabor as chancellor, and as commissioner to carry relief to Bohemia, but failing in this mission had been cast by him into prison. Here, brooding over his evil fate, and seeking comfort from the same source with his old employer and friend, he found it under the same form of belief, and left his prison a Sabbatarian zealot. The schism was quieted in 1638, under a settlement called the *Complanatio Dacsiana*, requiring new pledges to the worship of Christ; and the Sabbatarian party disappears, with its leader's death, in 1640.

Since that great loss of its sixty-two churches, Unitarianism had ceased to be the type and head of Protestantism in Transylvania. Even in Klausenburg, its chief seat, one fourth of its civil authority was by law conveyed to Calvinists. It continued, however, to enjoy a modest and useful security, chiefly occupied in the sober tasks of education. An interesting episode of this period of quiet was the arrival in Hungary of nearly four hundred exiles in their flight from Poland under the barbarous decree of John Casimir in 1660. They were set upon and spoiled by robbers on the way, so that many perished, some were scattered abroad in Hungary, and thirty or forty families only found refuge at length in hospitable Klausenburg,

where a congregation worshiped in the Polish tongue as late as 1792.¹

With the overthrow of Turkish power in 1687 came a new series of political changes disastrous to the Unitarian churches. Transylvania came again, as a province of Hungary, under the Austrian rule, whose inexorable centralism bore hard upon it. The "Leopoldine Compact" of 1691 confirms, it is true, the chartered rights of the several "religions"; but chartered freedom has ever weighed light against the dull bigotry of Hapsburg sovereigns. As early as 1693 Unitarians were deprived of their schools in Klausenburg, and the cathedral church that had been theirs since 1568 was coveted for Catholic possession. A few years later (1716) that church was seized from them by military force; and, though money compensation has been offered them for it since, they have refused, choosing to hold their legal title, which they hope some day to make good. More than seventy years of suppression followed, which might be called a chronic persecution. These years included all of the reign (1740-80) of the "heroic" Maria Theresa, who recompensed the well-known romantic loyalty of her Hungarian subjects by "the unprecedented policy of occupying half the official stations, in a nation of Evangelicals, with Catholics." In 1721 the church at Thorda was taken, in 1777 that at Kronstadt. All public offices were forbidden to Unitarians, costing them the adhesion of many noble families, their hereditary leaders: for why should they be debarred from serving their country in the only way they could? "Through all this period of persecution," says Mr. Fretwell, "the little band of Unitarians in the Szeklerland remained firm. Of them an old Hungarian chronicler had written that they were more severe in their morals than

¹ For a brief but curious account of this exiled community see Benkő, "Transsilvania," vol. ii., p. 583 (Vienna, 1778).

other Hungarians; and a Roman Catholic priest, writing to Vienna, was honest enough to confess that they possessed great economic virtues, were diligent, moral, and orderly men, exemplary in the performance of their duties to the state. He, however, asked for their repression, because their good lives were a recommendation of their detestable doctrine, and a standing reproach to the impure lives of the Catholic priesthood."

This iniquitous policy was continued till 1791, and was in some points even worse under the well-meant but formal and pedantic liberalism of Joseph II. (1780-90), who aimed to repress the independent life of Hungary, imposing everywhere the German tongue and law. Thus, says Rath, "though the yoke was lighter, yet it chafed worse here and there." This season of depression is relieved, for the subjects of our story, by the genius of one man, "the chief master-builder," Michael St. Abraham, "their eye, heart, tongue," who revived their faith, restored their worship, reconstructed their religious body, and served them well as bishop for twenty-one years (1737-58). To him the Unitarian churches of our day are especially indebted for quickening their religious life by the appeal at every synod to the body of the congregation, so saving their church order from being the mere machinery of an ecclesiastical caste.

A statute of the year 1791 (copied in the "Sketch" by Bishop Ferencz) recognizes in full the liberties of the four constitutional "religions" of Transylvania. This was the opening act of the present era of revival. Happily, it was followed the next year by the generous bequest of a sum equal to \$40,000, from a wealthy land-holder, Ladislas Szuki, who had abstained from founding a family that the estate he had enlarged in his life might all go to the noblest of objects at his death. This endowment has made pos-

sible the larger educational work of the present century, including maintenance of the college at Klausenburg, with scholarships, charities, widows' and orphans' funds, and school buildings both there and elsewhere. Again, in 1857, Paul Augustinowitz, a descendant of Polish exiles, bequeathed his whole fortune to the Unitarian body, making about one third of its entire endowment, and providing that one sixth of the income shall each year be added to the principal. These, with the founding of a law professorship about ten years earlier by Charles Rediger, are the most conspicuous among many a generous effort of these people in their poverty to strengthen the work of their hands.

Of equal and possibly even greater importance has been the help that has come to them from relations of sympathy newly opened with the western world of religious thought. In 1857 the Austrian authorities demanded proof that the Unitarian churches of Transylvania, impoverished as they were, could raise the means required to keep their schools up to the government standard; adding the insidious offer to furnish aid from public funds, on condition of controlling the courses of instruction. Then rose "a cry of terror and of pain." In their need an appeal was made by Mr. John Paget to generous friends in England, who came to their relief. This was but the beginning. It was followed by the endowment of a scholarship in Manchester New College (now of Oxford), which brings their young men of promise into the circles of highest English culture, while the alliance is strengthened from year to year by interchange of hospitalities on occasions of special public interest. Other endowments have followed, of which the best known is a professorship of the physical sciences founded by Mrs. Richmond, of Providence, R. I., and enlarged by her children in 1882.

The Unitarians of Transylvania have in their hands, as we are given to understand, by acknowledgment of other sects, the lead in the great work of general education. Their numbers, it is true, are small and nearly stationary.¹ But the value of their work is not to be reckoned by numbers. That value was testified in person by the emperor Francis Joseph on a recent visit. And, as evidence of the position they have reached, it may be added that, at the founding of the first Unitarian Church in Budapest, the national capital, October 2, 1881, "the Minister of Education, a Catholic, led the procession of guests in attendance, followed by the Secretary of State, after whom came the Calvinist Superintendent, the Privy-Councilor Banffy, three Ministerial Councilors (Unitarian), three Parliamentary Deputies, our historian Alexis Jakab [keeper of the archives], and many members of Parliament." Catholic and Calvinist may be found to associate without jealousy in Unitarian assemblies, and they accord to Unitarians (we are assured) the foremost place in the educational field.

In their religious work we specially note two things: first, the fidelity with which this communion sustains its organized church life, a formal and official sanctity being given to institutions or rites much more marked than in most liberal churches farther west; and, second, a wholesome, secular, out-door temper in religious things, having (if I may venture to trust my own judgment of them) less than we are accustomed to see, nearer home, of an emotional or purely sentimental piety. There, as elsewhere, may be slackness in church attendance, indifference to forms of belief, a marked drift to rationalism in opinion—

¹ In 1869, number of churches, 106; of members, 53,539.

" 1881, " " " 106; " " 53,862.

" The funded property of the country congregations amounts to something over \$100,000; their total indebtedness is only \$1000 " (1881).

not diminished, certainly, by the high honor paid to the memory of Francis David; but along with these are an energy, fidelity, devoted diligence in their work well deserving note. One of the sturdy country parsons whom I met held his daily service at four o'clock on summer mornings, when field laborers and harvesters, men and women, would leave rake, sickle, or basket at the porch, while he invoked a blessing upon their daily task. And the same spirit, of a simple reverence and kindliness, may be said to characterize alike the labors of the eloquent bishop in his chair, and of the instructors in school or university.



CHAPTER VI.

ENGLISH PIONEERS.

WE have seen that the Unitarian opinion gained a foothold in England during the early years of the Reformation, particularly in connection with the "Strangers' Church," established in 1550, and that it was trodden out in the reign of Queen Mary, under the same persecution with other forms of antipapal heresy. In Elizabeth's time, a new name, "Puritan," began presently to be heard (1564), defining the new and advanced type of Protestantism, which found itself more and more at variance with the Established Church. The open battle was, however, not at first between forms of faith. It was rather, as in the controversy of Cartwright and Hooker, between forms of church government, Presbyterian against Prelate. Individual belief enjoyed a certain tolerance, or neglect. We see this in the absolute freedom of discourse on religious things (when touched at all) among the great wits of that age, as Shakespeare, Spenser, Bacon, who appear wholly unmoved by the religious passions of their day, so flagrant just then upon the Continent. Such formal orthodoxy even as Bacon professed was at a later day, when Independency had begun to show its head. Statesmen like Burleigh, Walsingham, even Leicester and Essex, are reckoned Puritan in faith, but were clearly for a wholesome liberty in thinking. Raleigh, who abundantly represents the heroic side of the national struggle against popery, is even held to have been forerunner and chief of the English Deists. Those strong

and brilliant men of the world gave to that birth-time of England its true stamp. Protestantism with them, and as the Queen herself was forced to put up with it, meant national independence, a powerful check against Catholic intolerance, hearty abhorrence of Rome, and of Spain as the champion of Rome.

It is, then, with a painful shock we learn that, in 1575, the writ of evil fame "for the burning of an heretic" (issued in 1401 by Henry IV., to make his peace with the church after his usurping of the royal power),¹ was waked from a slumber of seventeen years, to extirpate a foreign heresy. A little congregation of "Arian" Baptists—apparently Dutch refugees from the horrors of Alva's rule—meeting in secret, were arrested on Easter Sunday. Thirty of its members were imprisoned, fourteen were banished on pain of death, five died in dungeons, two were burned alive on the 22d of the following July. "These unhappy wretches," says Fuller, "more obstinate than the rest, died in great horror, with crying and roaring." Nonconformists had received due ecclesiastical warning, two years before. The Queen had assented to an article declaring "that a Christian government may lawfully punish heretics with death." Still, Elizabeth seems to have felt that some defense of the act was due to the public conscience. She feared, it is said, lest it might be charged against her "that she was more earnest in asserting her own safety than God's honor" if she should put to death political conspirators and spare those who had affronted the Divine majesty.

But the heresy survived, and took a form more definitely Unitarian. One John Lewes is recorded to have been "burned at Norwich, September 18, 1583, for denying the godhead of Christ." Two years later a clergyman, Francis

¹ This writ was repealed in 1677, when "every bishop except one was against the repeal."

Ket, was burned at the same place for the same offense.⁷ Most of the so-called martyrdoms of Elizabeth's reign may fairly be ascribed to political conspiracies and alarms. The four already recounted would seem to have been the only martyrs for mere opinion. These were concessions to an intolerance more deadly than her own. The Queen, it is evident, had to keep the zeal of her ecclesiastics sharply in hand.

The last example in this kind to be noted is under the reign of James, whose Protestant policy was unhappily dwarfed and warped by his conceit of a "kingcraft" that should purchase terms of amity with the Catholic reaction, then drifting steadily towards the horrors of the Thirty Years' War. At Smithfield, in 1612, Bartholomew Legate—a man "in person comely, complexion black, age about forty years, of a bold spirit, confident carriage, fluent tongue, excellently skilled in the Scriptures"—and at Lichfield, Edward Wightman, were burned at the stake as "Anabaptists and Arianizers." Thus, says an historian of the Baptists, "this sect had the honor of leading the way [in 1535] and bringing up the rear of all the martyrs who were burned alive in England." It had been found more expedient, writes Thomas Fuller, that heretics "should silently and privately waste away in prisons, rather than to grace them and amuze others with the solemnity of a public execution."¹ (Vol. ii., p. 64.)

The humble names now recorded are obscure waymarks on the road that England was painfully traveling towards a complete religious liberty. The Anglican Church, as we are told, "under the Tudors was Erastian and Calvinist; under the Stuarts it was sacerdotal and Arminian." So long, however, as the government was Protestant in name,

¹ Nearly eight thousand are said to have thus perished in the evil days following the Restoration of 1660.

there was no formal secession of Presbyterian from Episcopal. On one hand, Archbishop Laud is said to have been the strongest defense of the national church as against papacy. On the other hand, under shelter of that ecclesiastical alliance, the Puritan cause was slowly gaining strength for the struggle that lay before it, little heeding that it but led the way to the more daring assault of Independency.

Puritanism, hitherto best known under such names as Calvinist and Presbyterian, has been defined as implying "Scripturalism, a severe morality, popular sympathy, and ardent attachment to civil freedom." A vigorous attempt was made to hold it in check when, in 1640, Laud issued a series of Canons,¹ the fourth of them being in condemnation of "the damnable and cursed heresy of Socinianism." Here we are struck by the emergence of a new name in English theological parties. The Unitarians of Poland had now just begun to decline from their prosperity and influence. Two years before, they had felt the first hard blow of persecution in the destruction of their college and press at Racovia. The effect of this blow would naturally be to scatter their opinions, like sparks, over a wider circle. And a few points will here show how they had drawn such attention in England as to call forth Laud's special animosity.

As early as 1614, within ten years after the death of Socinus, the "Racovian Catechism," in a Latin version, had been publicly burned in London, and its circulation, so far as might be, had been suppressed. In 1616 the first English church and congregation of Independents had been gathered by Henry Jacob, a disciple and companion of John Robinson in Leyden, who afterwards joined the Plymouth colony in America. With avowed Independency came increased liberty of thinking in the body of the peo-

¹ These will be found in Neal's "History of the Puritans," vol. ii.

ple. In 1635 appeared Chillingworth's great work in defense of Protestantism, in which he made his celebrated declaration that "the Bible, the Bible, the Bible only is the religion of Protestants." This necessarily carried with it the freedom of private criticism and interpretation. Chillingworth was a writer who struck hard and sharp in controversy. Hobbes likens him to "a lusty fighting fellow, that did drive his enemies before him, but would often give his owne party terrible smart back-blowes." His position was exactly that contended for from the beginning by the Polish Unitarians; and it is no wonder that the charge of "Socinianism" was at once made against him. This was done in 1636, in a pamphlet by a Jesuit, Edward Knott. In his first chapter Knott "gives an account of the Socinians, in which he does everything in his power to render them odious in the eyes of the public"; while in the second chapter he makes a point against the Church of England (which demands outward conformity only), that it has no infallible Head, like Rome, and so invites laxity and easiness of belief. The charge was followed up against Chillingworth with extreme virulence until his death, in 1644, particularly by Francis Cheynell, rector of Petworth. Cheynell published in 1643 a work entitled "The Rise, Growth, and Danger of Socinianism, together with a Plain Discovery of a Desperate Design of Corrupting the Protestant Religion," ascribed to Chillingworth, and "encouraged by the doctrines and practices of the Arminian, Socinian, and Popish party." So far, indeed, he carried his animosity, that at Chillingworth's burial he cast into the grave a copy of his great "Defense," saying, "Get thee gone, thou cursed book, which has seduced so many precious souls! Get thee gone, thou corrupt, rotten book—earth to earth, dust to dust! Go, rot with thy author!" The offense was a suspicion of being touched by the Unitarian heresy.

to have "run madde with reason" and tolerate heresy

net that year. But the Presbyterians claimed, as Canterbury or Rome, to hold a form of government divinely ordained, of full authority and conduct; and the same weapons that had their ancient foe, the Hierarchy, they now turned new enemies, the Independents. From many of the magnificent pamphlets put forth by Milton, in 1644, we see with what enthusiasm, eloquence and splendid hope the battle was kept up on their side. The Independents in King James's time had Bacon had scornfully said of them, "but a number of very silly and base people, here and there dispersed." Hunted out of England in 1643, in Holland the secure shelter from which they sent their colonists back into England and beyond, they had in 1616 a single congregation with vigor and life; and "from this as a nucleus Independency spread through England, and, in spite of the opposition of Laud and the court, came in the middle of the century to occupy a dominant place among the forces which the destinies of England were swayed." The struggle of parties in the Long Parliament began, and during the sessions of the Westminster Assembly the controversy grew more bitter.

to the sending of a special embassy from New England in 1644, to protect its threatened system of Congregationalism. In the same year appeared the first of a series of volumes carrying on the attack on the Presbyterian side, whose very titles carry in them the venom of the debate. The attack had been provoked by the variety of sects and the excessive laxity of opinion, leading to many a scandal and disorder, which mere independency had quickly run into. "License they mean when they cry liberty," expostulated Milton; "asses, apes, and dogs," he did not scruple to call the controversialists of his day. A few titles will show sufficiently the general line followed in this battle of the books.

A bitter attack on Chillingworth, it will be remembered, had appeared in 1643, in Cheynell's "Rise, Growth, and Danger of Socinianism." The next year Thomas Edwards published his "*Antapologia* [reply to a defense by Philip Nye and others], wherein are handled the controversies of these times," including a particular mention of the Socinians. The "*Antapologia*" is offered as "a true glass to behold the faces of Presbytery and Independency in, with the beauty, order, and strength of the one, and the deformity, disorder, and weakness of the other." Its tone, however, is moderate, not to say dull, beside that of its more famous sequel, published in 1645, under the title—

"*Gangræna: A Catalogue and Discovery of Many of the Errors, Heresies, Blasphemies, and Pernicious Practices of the Sectaries of this Time.*" Of errors, one hundred and seventy-six are catalogued, ranging from antitrinitarian "blasphemies" to dangerous and lax assertions, very numerous, in which sentiment disdains the bounds of reason. Among "pernicious practices of the Sectaries," conspicuous are disorders introduced by Anabaptists, Antinomians, and Familists (disciples of Free Love, as we should call them), violating all decorum of public worship. Such

have, in 1646, "The Utter Routing of the
of all the Independents and Sectaries," by
sk, whose character and temper appear suf-
s title.

appeared the fourth edition of a book by
itt, entitled "Heresiography: or, A Descrip-
Heretickes and Sectaries sprung up in these
" both "Socinians, who teach that Christ dyed
e for our sins," and "Arrians, who deny the
ist."

1648, was published "A Survey of the Spirit-
st, Opening the Secrets of Familism and Anti-

This interests us, in particular, by its recital
of Ann Hutchinson and her following in Bos-
years before, with its tragic sequel.

t items bear upon our present topic chiefly as
process that led to the "Draconic" ordinance
phemy and heresy, passed in May, 1648. This
as the final effort of the Presbyterian party to
edom of discussion by public law. Its imme-
on was a translation of "Satan's Stratagems"
y Jacopo Aconzio, an Italian jurist and engi-
abeth's time'), which had led to an investiga-
inism at Oxford. "It enacted that all such

the Son is not God, or the Holy Ghost is not God, or that they three are not One Eternal God, or that in like manner maintain and publish that Christ is not equal with the Father, shall be adjudged *guilty of felony*. And in case the party upon his trial shall not abjure his said error and defense and maintenance of the same, *he shall suffer the pains of death*, as in case of felony, without benefit of clergy."

Seven months later, "Pride's Purge" had effectually destroyed the power of the Presbyterian party in Parliament, and the ordinance was never carried into full effect. Independency was already dominant in the army. A new era of tolerance had begun when, in 1653, Cromwell announced his "Articles for the government of the Commonwealth." These, while they "recommend" the Christian religion as "the public profession of these nations," and guarantee that it shall be duly maintained and taught, add that "none shall be compelled by penalties or otherwise" to such public profession, "but that endeavors be used to win them by sound doctrine and the example of a good conversation." They add, further, that all professing Christian belief "shall be protected in the profession of the faith and exercise of their religion, . . . provided this liberty be not extended to Popery or Prelacy, nor to such as, under the profession of Christ, hold forth and practice licentiousness."¹ Further, to explain the true meaning of these articles, Richard Baxter in this same year (1653) drew up an enumeration of the "essentials" of the Christian religion, having been "sent for up to London" for this purpose. These "essentials" were the Decalogue, the Lord's Prayer, and the Apostles' Creed. Some friends objected that his terms were so broad as to include both Papists and Socinians; upon which, he says, "I answered

¹ Articles xxxv-xxxvii.

them, 'So much the better, and so much the fitter it is to be the matter of our concord.' "

To complete this record of the Commonwealth period, the following may be added. (1) In 1655 was published "The Gospel Defense" (*Vindiciæ Evangelicæ*) of John Owen, most eminent of scholars among the Independents, then doing good service at Oxford in upholding the cause of sound learning in the university. It was written to counteract the Unitarian heresy, too well protected under the toleration enforced by Cromwell.¹ "The evil is at the doore," he says; "there is not a Citty, a Towne, scarce a Village in England, where some of this poyson is not poured forth." The book is further interesting to us from a pretty full though distorted and hostile narrative of the antitrinitarian movement in Poland and Transylvania. (2) In 1656 appeared Chewney's "Anti-Socinianism," with an appendix entitled "Heresiarchy: or, A Cage of Unclean Birds, Containing the Authors, Propagators, and Chief Disseminators of this Damnable Socinian Heresie," of which the title shall here suffice. (3) In 1657 John Bagshaw produced in Latin "Two Anti-Socinian Dissertations," showing "that Socinians ought not to be called Christians," and disputing "whether the good works of unbelievers are sinful." These three are mostly a harmless rethreshing of the old straw of controversy. They serve, at best, to put in relief the noble tolerance of the great Protector, who was observed in his later years to be gentler towards all men, even to those of the Church of England.

The events thus briefly traced in outline make the background on which we have now to follow the biography of the man who best represents the movement we are considering.

¹ In this year, as told below (p. 134), Cromwell sent John Biddle to a safe restraint in the Scilly Islands, taking him out of the city prison, where he was confined by order of the Parliament.

John Biddle has been called the father, the earliest witness, and the martyr of English Unitarianism. He was born in 1615, in a small town near Gloucester. "His father," says his earliest biographer, "was of a middle sort of yeoman, and also dealt in woolen clothes, by which means he maintained his family honestly, and with credit suitable to his rank, or rather above it." The boy was so proficient in the free school of his native town that before he was ten he drew the notice of a gentleman of the neighborhood, who, by an "exhibition" (or annual gift) of ten pounds, liberal for those days, helped him to the best education to be had. At twenty-three he was a graduate of Oxford, and at twenty-six master of arts and principal of the Crisp Free School in Gloucester. While in the university he had been known as especially grave and studious, inclined to serious things. He knew by heart, it was said, the whole of the New Testament, Greek as well as English, down to and including the first four chapters of "Revelation." At twenty-nine (May 2, 1644) he had formulated a confession of faith as to the trinity, its main points being (1) that there is but one Divine Essence, properly called God; (2) that God, in this highest sense, exists but in one Person; (3) that Christ is truly God "by being truly, really, and properly united" with the Father. So far, this seems to have been purely a personal confession, the ground and motive of a very thoughtful and humble piety. To avoid cavil, he altered the phrase a little later, so as to admit "three in that one Divine Essence, *commonly termed* Persons."

These have been commonly held to be the terms of a safe and sufficient orthodoxy, at least for the ordinary and public profession of belief. But they led to private discussion among near friends, and to further study on his part, in the course of which he drew up twelve arguments

oucester gave bail for him, with six months here he was visited by Archbishop Usher, kindly to convince him of his error. Again id, and a committee was deputed to examine ame to nothing, except that a copy of his . burned.

after his first arrest, he addressed a pathetic Henry Vane, beseeching, "If you have any ds them that are in misery, that you would e my discharge, or at least make report to ching my denial of the supposed deity of the ' the only point in question, since he had re-rawn into a discussion of the nature of Christ. , indeed, he seems to have been ignorant of t of the Socinians. His view is wholly origi-wn. He follows his appeal with a long state-ns, wishing, no doubt, to put the whole case of so generous an advocate as Vane. His wowing his belief and motive are his best "There is, I say, one principal Spirit among gels, called by the name of the Advocate, or rit, or the Good Spirit of God, or the Spirit by nce. This opinion of mine is attested by the of the Scripture, which perpetually speaketh

he continues, "no man, though never so subtle, and though he turn and wind his wit every way, shall ever be able to make sense, unless he take the Holy Spirit to be what I say." And he further adds, "For my own particular, after a long, impartial inquiry of the truth in this controversy, and after much earnest calling upon God to give unto me the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him, I find myself obliged, both by the principles of Scripture and of reason, to embrace the opinion I now hold forth; and as much as in me lieth, to endeavor that the honor of Almighty God be not transferred to another, not only to the offense of God himself, but also of his Holy Spirit, who cannot but be grieved to have that ignorantly ascribed to himself which is proper to God that sends him, and which he nowhere challengeth to himself in Scripture. What shall befall me in the pursuance of this work I refer to the disposal of the all-wise God, whose glory is dearer to me not only than my liberty, but than my life."¹ "God is jealous of his honor" is the phrase he afterwards used to justify his own persistent urging of the argument. The next year, in "a confession of faith touching the Holy Trinity according to the Scripture," he would not deny the doctrine, but only its unscriptural interpretation. This confession was apparently composed in prison. It was printed in 1648, and reprinted, as we have it now, by his friend Thomas Firmin, in 1691.

To silence this one poor schoolmaster is said to have been the pressing motive for urging the "Draconian ordinance" against blasphemy and heresy already described (p. 128). But bigotry overshot its mark. The ordinance was so loaded down with details of the creed it would maintain, and the heresies it meant to stifle, that practically it lay a dead letter. Meanwhile the great political crisis

¹ From vol. i. of "Unitarian Tracts," published in 1691.

he gathered about him the nucleus of a Unitarian community. This, however, did not outlast his death. We can easily find him busied in translating and circulating tracts of Unitarians abroad, including a biography of William Miller. But his chief offense appears to have been a "Treatise of Atechism," published in 1654, answering questions in the very words of Scripture. A reply appeared, under the title "The Blasphemer Slain." The House of December Parliament declared the "Treatise" heretical and blasphemous, ordering all copies to be burned; and the next day its author was committed to close confinement in the "Gate-house." Parliament would have proceeded further with him, but on January 1, 1655, it was suddenly dissolved by Cromwell. Partridge was released, but was again arrested in sequence for a discussion. To keep the peace between the dissenters as might be, he was now sent to an honorable retirement in the Scilly Islands by Cromwell. He made a modest allowance for his support. On his return to London on his release, in the spring of 1656, he spent two and a half years of quiet activity—"enjoying divine comfort from the heavenly contemplations which retirement gave him opportunity for"—he took no pastoral charge, only retreating for a time into

But he did not so escape the cruelty of his persecutors. "For on the 1st of June, 1662, he was haled out of his lodgings, where he was convened with some few of his friends for Divine worship, and carried before Sir Richard Brown, who forthwith committed them all to the public prison, John Biddle to the dungeon, where he lay for five hours, and was denied the benefit of the law which admits offenders of that sort to bail for their appearance." He was condemned to a fine of one hundred pounds, with a threat of seven years' imprisonment. But within five weeks, "by reason of the noisomeness of the place and the pent air," he fell into a deadly sickness. He was barely able to be removed for two days of repose among friends, when he died, on the 22d of September, at the age of forty-seven. He had often said "that if he should be once more cast into prison, he should never be restored to liberty; and, moreover, that *the work was done*."

The little church gathered by John Biddle did not survive him, though the doctrine he taught was silently adopted in many dissenting congregations at a later day. It was embraced, with eager assent, among others by a young disciple, Thomas Firmin (1632-97), of whose most honorable record as a Unitarian layman a word should be said in this place. He had already been turned from his Calvinistic belief by an Arminian preacher, John Goodwin; and his name appears among the group that through Biddle's long season of persecution had stood true to him. Although in later years he commonly worshiped in the Church of England, he held his liberal faith through his prosperous, beneficent, and honored life. He was a London merchant, a man of modest fortune (never exceeding some forty thousand dollars), which he drew upon for charitable uses with a wealth of generosity amazing and unexampled in those profligate days. The amount of

s lifetime, and generous praise is recorded of monument upon the wall of the parish church he. To him we probably owe the survival of the and memory of John Biddle; certainly, of his and his full profession of belief, for at his own and published, in 1691, the papers which first of six volumes of the "Unitarian Tracts." ¹ himself gives the share taken by the defenders of n the vigorous discussion that went on during rs of the century. This remarkable episode in of religious thought in England remains now bed.

esbyterian party, which had brought to pass the of the king, rejoiced in the condemnation of the had been eager to destroy, they were speedily a better mind. Just within a month before e's death, two thousand of their ministers made ment for whatever fault that party had been by voluntarily resigning their livings in the England on the new "St. Bartholomew's Day " , 1662), expelled by the Act of Uniformity lately harles's pledge had been "that no man shall ed or called in question for differences of opin- cution which do not disturb the peace

logians—Nonconformists now, and presently to be known as Dissenters—lost their stomach for speculative debate, which went henceforth into other hands.

An occasion for renewing the debate was found in 1688. A Presbyterian preacher, Thomas Vincent, had sharply rebuked some members of his congregation who had gone for curiosity to hear the doctrine declared at a Quaker meeting. Quakerism had come up twenty-one years before, in 1647, through the testimony of George Fox, in a time when there was great laxity in belief and disorder of morals, after the crushing defeat of monarchy in the field; and had just gained, in 1667, its most distinguished advocate in Robert Barclay. Among others, it was early embraced by that warm-hearted, brilliant, opinionated youth, William Penn, who was at this time closely intimate with one of its most noted preachers, George Whitehead. Resenting the contumely of Vincent, who charged its doctrine of the Inner Light as "damnable," these two now demanded a hearing, which was grudgingly allowed them in the Presbyterian chapel, already packed with unfriendly auditors. The debate was at once turned to a challenge of their opinion on the trinity; and, whatever they might wish to say, they soon found it "impossible to obtain a hearing."

This incident led Penn, now at the age of twenty-four, to prepare and publish a little pamphlet, with the title "The Sandy Foundation Shaken." It is an argument of appeal or protest, rather than of labored criticism; a plain, brave, frank word, suited to open a discussion, not a treatise or an essay, such as the controversial fashion of the time might seem to demand. Even at our later day we are struck by the vigor and decision of the protest. The scholastic doctrine of the trinity; the assertion that "satisfaction" can be made for the sin of one by the suffering

of another, or that one who is himself guilty can be "justified" by another's righteousness,—these cardinal points of Calvin's creed are attacked, not by arguments carefully drawn from Scripture, but by appeal to the natural reason and conscience of men. We seem, in this appeal, to hear the very voice of our own day, rather than those echoes of the past we have been so long used to. Channing, in his most convincing argument, did not go an inch beyond it.

Meanwhile there went on a quiet spread of Unitarian opinion in England, embracing the illustrious names of John Milton and Algernon Sidney. Milton's argument, which is that commonly called Arian, is contained in a Latin treatise on "Christian Doctrine," which lay in manuscript till 1823, when it was brought to light and soon after published, with a translation, making the text of Macaulay's celebrated essay. Sidney's is included among those speculations, political and philosophic, which brought him to the block in 1683. There was, too, a steady inflow of antitrinitarian writings from the Continent, mostly from Polish sources, which called out, among other protests, in 1680, a dissertation on Socinus and Socinianism by George Ashwell, who sums up his judgment of the man in the generous terms before quoted.¹

A more important waymark of the course the weary debate now took is found in a Latin essay, "A Defense of the Nicene Faith," by the Rev. George Bull, published in 1685. This essay is partly a concession to the stress of argument on purely Scripture grounds, partly an attempt to guide the discussion into a different channel. The Christian writers before Athanasius are cited in much detail, with a view to show that the real mind of the early church, while ascribing every Divine perfection to the Son and Spirit, made these "subordinate" in the one point,

¹ At the end of Chapter III. (p. 72).

that the Father alone is self-subsistent, and that from him alone those perfections are granted and derived. This view was attacked about thirty years later, on Arian grounds, in a pamphlet by Daniel Whitby.¹

But the way was really opened to the controversy now about to follow, by the Toleration Act of 1689, passed after the accession of William and Mary. This Act excluded both papists and deniers of the trinity from the indulgence granted to Dissent. Still, the granting of it, as Locke foresaw, was likely to bring about a larger liberty. In this very year the Houses of Convocation, then sitting, had their attention called to certain brief "Notes" on the Athanasian Creed, with other writings of heretical tendency. In 1690 the debate was fairly opened by Dr. Arthur Bury, rector of Lincoln College, in a tract entitled "The Naked Gospel." This tract charges that the church doctrine of the trinity, after centuries of debate, was first made obligatory by an edict of Theodosius, later than 380. Its author would forestall controversy on the subject by limiting debate to the one question, What was the doctrine actually taught by Christ and the apostles? The discussion that now follows lay wholly within the limits of the Church of England, and was conducted by eminent divines belonging to that church. It gives us three differing points of view.

The first is shown in an essay entitled "Letters on the Trinity," by Dr. John Wallis, an elderly Oxford professor of mathematics. The form of doctrine, he urges, is essential by reason of the dignity and steadiness it gives to the church system of faith. The only difficulty is in its philosophic interpretation. But why perplex ourselves with that? Let us only, for the sake of peace, accept the *dictum* of the church that there are "three Somewhats" in

¹ Printed in Sparks's "Tracts," vol. i.

y God is in three Persons." Take the simplest
 tical illustrations: has not a cube three "some-
 ch we call its three dimensions—length, breadth,
 ? Of these no one can be confounded with
 e others, and they are all equal; yet they are
 ibes, but one. May we not interpret our doctri-
 in some such way as this?

lenge is next taken up by Dr. William Sherlock,
 t. Paul's, and father of the more celebrated
 a "Vindication of the Holy and Ever-Blessed
 He goes into the discussion too hastily, with a
 essly domineering and with some carelessness
 thinking to give weight to his argument by a
 y which he has not clearly thought out to him-
 hand. What constitutes a Person, he says, is
ousness. We accept the Trinity as consisting of
 ons: now each of these is distinct in his own
 ousness, "just as three finite and created minds
 ile "they are united into one by a *mutual con-*
 which no created spirits have." This assertion,
 gain and again, with some variety and expansion
 —as if he would drown objection by the ampli-
 ne in which it is spoken,—makes the substance

"Animadversions upon Dr. Sherlock's Book" (1693), and again in "Tritheism Charged upon Dr. Sherlock's New Notion of the Trinity" (1695). We may pass over the cavils at his opponent's lordly tone and at the phrases already quoted, and come to the definition which he would put in their place: "The three Persons of the blessed Trinity are one and the same undivided Essence, Nature, or Godhead, diversified only by three different modes of subsistence, which are sometimes called *properties* and sometimes *relations*;" and these again, as found in spiritual natures, he compares to "postures" in material forms. "We do hold and affirm," he says, "that the Father communicates his nature, under a different *mode of subsisting* from what it has in himself, to another; and that such a communication of it, in such a peculiar way, is called his begetting of a son" (p. 292).

This substitution of feebler phrases for the sublime though perhaps vague symbolism under which the church has veiled the eternal mystery of the Godhead, exposed Dr. South to as merciless retort, as keenly pressed, as that he had applied to Sherlock. As it looked to unfriendly eyes, the situation was this: three men, all eminent theologians, all speaking with authority, all accepting the same creed, all members of the same Establishment, gave each an interpretation to the same words which both the others held to be heretical and misleading; constructively, even blasphemous. Thus their Unitarian critics were well content to leave them to confute one another. One view, they said, was clearly tritheistic, one was Sabellian, while the third they could themselves well assent to.¹ The three interpretations continued, however, to abide together, as peaceably as they might, in the shelter of the Establishment. This was now, in a time of violent political changes,

¹ See "Unitarian Tracts," vols. ii. and iii.

trust, and often to new scenes of open enmity which they have, almost from their the divinity of Christ?"¹ A well-known example of the "Arian" clergy of that day is Dr. Samuel Johnson who wrote, in 1724: "The Scripture, when it *the One God, or the Only God*, always means the Person of the Father;" and again, "The Son, or person, is not self-existent, but derives his being; and all his attributes, from the Father, as from the Cause" (pp. 224, 270). No Unitarian state- hitherto said more than this.

appeared Locke's "Reasonableness of Christian- taining that the one "essential" of Christian be- acceptance of Jesus as the Messiah. This was at tled by John Edwards, son of the author of "Gan- with almost all his father's virulence, charging that is a Socinian but afraid to own it. Locke might r, as he did, that he had not read a single Socinian but all the charge implied was in the air. What- most free in the heritage of thought, Locke had nto as deeply as any man. The real importance Reasonableness," in the history of opinion, is that e last word, spoken judicially, in a long debate ould now only repeat itself; and that it was the

immediate prelude to the Deistical Controversy, which engaged the more radical thinkers of England for the next fifty years.¹

The name of one other Unitarian witness interests us, from the influence it had in the discussion that sprang up a little later in America. Thomas Emlyn (1663-1741)—a man of serious, sweet, and candid temper, a devoted pastor, especially tender and comforting in prayer—began his career among the Nonconformists, preaching at the early age of nineteen, in London. He was an eye-witness, the next year, of the execution of Lord William Russell, which no doubt helped confirm him in the faith of freedom. At twenty-one he went to Belfast, in the household of a family of rank. In the revolutionary year, 1688, we find him preaching "with pistols in his pocket" in the disturbed district of the north of Ireland. In discussion with a friend on Sherlock's "Vindication," he held to the Arian view against the Socinian. But he never carried the argument into the pulpit, where his teaching was always grave, tender, and practical. After a ten years' ministry in Dublin, while in his fresh grief at the loss of his admirable wife, he was called to account for his private opinions. His aged colleague was put on the stand to testify of his intimate conversations. Narrow Nonconformists appealed to church and state against him, and he was punished by a year's imprisonment, with a fine of a thousand pounds. The witness of his later life in England is found in a volume of sermons and one of essays in defense of his opinions, introduced by a biography warm from a friendly hand.

One pitiful tragedy completes the tale of the period we have been reviewing. In January, 1697, one Thomas Aikenhead, a boy of eighteen, a student in the University of Edinburgh, "not vicious, and extremely studious," was

¹ See the author's "Christian History," vol. iii., pp. 176-181.

executed for blasphemy. The Scottish capital, apparently, had not caught the cosmopolitan temper which would have made such an act impossible in London. Within two years, an old statute inflicting the penalty of death for blasphemy had—to the horror of such minds as Locke's—been furbished up afresh. The boy Aikenhead was convicted, by testimony of his college-mates, of such offenses as saying, in the warmth of debate, that to him the phrase "god-man" was as meaningless as if one should say "goat-stag," or "square-round," with other expressions which were construed to signify contempt of the Bible or of the Divine name. He was tried, without counsel to cross-examine the witnesses (college boys like himself) or explain to them what their testimony might imply as to the fate before him. The most important part of the evidence he explicitly denied. Three years later, or a little more, the Act of Union between England and Scotland would probably have made this shocking act impossible.

Heresy could no longer be punished by death in England. But, to propitiate such bigotry as still survived, an act was passed, in 1698, "for the more effectual suppressing of blasphemy and profaneness." It contained the following terms, which are an essential sequel to the review that has now been taken: namely, that "if any person having been educated in, or at any time having made profession of, the Christian religion, within this realm, shall by writing, printing, teaching, or advised speaking, deny any one of the Persons of the Holy Trinity to be God; or shall assert or maintain that there are more Gods than one, or shall deny the Christian religion to be true, or the holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be of Divine authority, and shall be thereof lawfully convicted by the oath of two or more credible witnesses,—such person shall for the first offense be adjudged incapable and disabled in

law to have and enjoy any office or employment, civil or military": the penalty for repeating the offense being total loss of all civil rights—such as right to inherit or defense at law—with three years' imprisonment. This supremely wicked statute—wicked because passed by men without conscience or conviction on the subject, and made intentionally a dead letter except when it might serve for malicious prosecution—was not repealed till 1813. Unitarians in England were not reinvested with their full civil rights until the passage of the "Dissenters' Chapels Act" in 1844.¹

¹ See below, p. 153.

CHAPTER VII.

UNITARIAN DISSENT IN ENGLAND.

THE discussion which filled so large a space at the close of the seventeenth century gave to the Unitarian doctrine, more or less disguised, a certain recognized standing both in the Established Church and among the more educated of the Nonconformists. Two names, in particular, show this result. Samuel Clarke (1675-1729), eminent alike as a scholar, a mathematician, and a churchman, the best known defender at that day of a philosophical theism, held a position frankly Arian; and his revised liturgy was adopted, almost without change, in the earlier Unitarian congregations. Nathaniel Lardner (1684-1768), the most learned theologian among the Presbyterians, and far the most eminent defender of historical Christianity against the Deists, confessed a Unitarianism more and more pronounced, during a career distinguished as much for candor and thought as for laborious erudition. Thus, for more than half a century, there was a complete lull in a dispute that a little while before had looked so implacable and vindictive.

To explain this change, we note that the Deistical controversy—following from the argument of Locke's "Reasonableness," and occupying almost exactly the first half of the eighteenth century (1696-1748)—had opened up a new issue, that of Rationalism pure and simple. In that debate the Unitarians ranked themselves, with strong conviction, among the defenders of a miraculous revelation. For considerably more than a hundred years not one of any note among them wavered in this position. And,

while the stress of that controversy lasted, questions of doctrinal interpretation were dwarfed, if not forgotten.

The body of English Dissenters had been drawn together by the common and deep wrong they suffered under, through the series of execrable acts passed by the government of the Restoration.¹ From time to time attempts were made to give them unity and strength under some form of confession that might embrace them all. But the pressure was lightened by the Act of Toleration (1689); and the Dissenting body, which had come together from widely different sources, fell again into its natural groups. The Presbyterians—as nobly shown in the case of Baxter—had inherited something of the mental breadth, the pliancy of organization, and the comparative easiness as to doctrine, that belong to a great secular Establishment, like that from which they had withdrawn against their will. The Independents, who had voluntarily forsaken the National Church for conviction's sake, held more rigidly to their points of faith, and became forerunners of the stricter Evangelical bodies of a later day. Individuals among them, however, held that faith loosely, as Watts (1674–1748), who is understood to have died a Unitarian;² and Doddridge (1702–51), whose vague “in-dwelling scheme” was hardly less heretical. The Baptists had never been bound by a formal creed, and their theology, sharply individualized, had proved the germ or the ally of various heresies; but they were more closely held by their strict requirement of adult baptism, which defined them sharply as a sect, tending also to divide into sub-

¹ The Act of Uniformity, 1662; the Conventicle Act, 1664; the Five-Mile Act, 1665; the Test and Corporation Acts, 1673 (abolished, 1778). Under the operation of these it is stated that, from first to last, nearly eight thousand persons perished in various prisons. (See p. 28)

² “I have sometimes carried reason,” he says, “even to the camp of Socinus; but then Saint John gives my soul a twitch.”

sects—some Sabbatarian, some of a more free communion. These several tendencies reappear in the later history of Unitarian Dissent. While not one of its congregations bears the title "Independent," no less than twenty-five (eight in England and seventeen in Ireland) are still known as "Presbyterian," and several were originally Baptist—though only two of them (one each in England and in Wales) have kept that name in their recorded title. So many of them are, in fact, of Presbyterian descent, that that name has been seriously proposed, in our day, for adoption by the whole body of Liberal congregations, so as to avoid the narrow polemic associations of the title "Unitarian."

Under the conditions of toleration granted them, English Dissenters were bound by the harsh and unjust restriction that they must assent to all the properly *doctrinal* articles of the Church of England,—that is, to thirty-five out of the thirty-nine,—having dispensation only from the four which define the claims of church authority. The restriction was as futile as it was unjust. Latitude of interpretation was not likely to be more fettered outside the church walls than within them. We may, it is true, assume that the subscription of Dissenters was oftener honestly made than that of Churchmen. But it was felt to be a badge of subjection, and it galled. It was, besides, not only a check on honest liberty of thinking, but a standing invitation to casuistry and subterfuge. This point of conscience pricked more and more sharply as the stress of the Deistical controversy abated. And we find, accordingly, just after the middle of the century, a series of efforts or appeals to Parliament—long made in vain, though urged by a most intelligent and influential portion of the Anglican clergy—to have the terms of subscription lightened.¹

¹ A bill of relief passed the Commons in 1772, but was defeated by the Lords. Since 1779, only "belief in Christianity" is required of the Dissenting clergy.

It is just here that Unitarian Dissent in England properly begins. Its history will be best told in a short series of representative lives.

The first Unitarian chapel, distinctly known as such, was founded in Essex Street, London, by Theophilus Lindsey, in 1778. Lindsey (1723-1808) was a clergyman of the Church of England, who had on grounds of conscience given up his living at Catterick, in Yorkshire, five years before. He was a man of peculiarly winning and gracious personality; of gentle temper, that might easily have been spoiled by the indulgence and flattery surrounding him in youth; a refined scholar and devoted parish minister, generously and on principle spending his income in charities among the distressed; holding, against the somber view of Butler, Paley's cheerful belief in the gladness of all sentient things, and against the harsh theology of his time the kindlier hope of a restoration of all souls in the life to come. As early as 1763, at his transfer to the highly privileged position in Catterick, he had felt scruples at renewing subscription to certain of the articles; but had persuaded himself that his own explanation of them (a Sabellianism like that of Wallis) might be fairly enough covered by the required formula. "My great difficulty," he says, "was on the point of worship [paid to Christ]; in comparison with this, subscription to the articles, however momentous in itself, gave me then but little concern."¹

While here, however, he came under two strong personal influences which did much to decide his course. One was from intimate association with an elderly clergyman (Archdeacon Blackburne, his wife's stepfather), whose beliefs and scruples were very like his own, who put the case in this way: "I confess that, with my present views, I should not be free to sign the articles again. But I did

¹ "Apology," p. 20.

sign them once in good faith; and, in signing them, I pledged my life to a work the most sacred and important that I could conceive. *Am I free to abandon that work?* I see how it will end with you. With your convictions it is only a question of time when you will leave the church. But for me it is too late to make the change. On the whole, my conscience keeps me where I am."¹

The other influence was from a close friendship formed during this time with Joseph Priestley, then a Dissenting minister at Leeds. Priestley's restless, versatile, and self-confident intelligence would of itself encourage all liberty of thinking. But he had had his own hard experience of ill-paid work and narrow circumstances. He was scrupulous not to urge his friend's conscience beyond its natural pace. "Stay where you are," was the burden of his advice; "your work is a good work, and when the time comes that you must change it, the way will be clear to you."

Advice so given, in the guise of prudence, may well have the effect in a generous mind to strengthen more than weaken the impulse towards self-sacrifice. Here Lindsey was helped by the noble spirit of his wife, herself a clergyman's daughter, of more natural courage and a more practical temper than his own, along with great reverence of his character and work, and a tender esteem of his serener quality, calling him "one of the best, gentlest, and most indulgent of human beings." She had heartily shared in his unstinted neighborly charities, and as heartily stood by him now in whatever loss he might take upon himself.² Seeing the peril of insincerity in all creeds, he

¹ Rutt's "Life of Priestley," vol. ii., p. 82. (Citation much condensed.)

² A most interesting sketch of this admirable woman is given by her friend Mrs. Cappe in the "Monthly Repository" of February, 1812. When, rallying from a painful illness, her husband spoke of the burden upon his mind in holding his position, her prompt reply was, "Then relinquish it: God will

had taken an active share in the efforts, made among men of other callings as well as clergymen, to have the terms of subscription lightened by public law, "traveling upwards of two thousand miles in the winter of 1771-72 to obtain signatures to the petition" for that object. As these efforts were baffled, he consented to remain only while some hope remained that the relief might be granted. When this hope was finally lost, he did not delay to quit his charge, preaching his farewell words November 28, 1773, having just passed his fiftieth year.

The real interest in Lindsey's withdrawal from the church is—as that of every religious crisis—less a doctrinal than a moral or spiritual interest. It brought to the front the question of conscience in the assent to dogma, which has been and still is smothered under reasons of a supposed expediency, that can be cut only by the sharp sword of individual conviction. To meet this question, we could not well invent a finer test case than his: the scholarly temper, the conservative habit, the restraints of friendship, the love of consecrated forms (for to the end of his life he used a very moderately revised edition of the church liturgy), the devotion to professional duty, the kindly surroundings and modest refinements of life familiar to him up to the age of fifty; and, as against them all, the abrupt entrance upon a way of life in which, most literally, "he knew not whither he went." His former bounties, and his wife's, had left them in a condition hardly a step from downright and pressing poverty. Furniture, plate, and books all had to be sold. Coming to London, they could for some years, in exchange for their fair country vicarage, occupy only two small rooms on the ground floor of a tenement in Holborn.

provide." In an epidemic of smallpox she caused the children of that and neighboring parishes to be inoculated, attending personally to all the cases (we are told), of which she lost not one. (This was before vaccination, which was discovered in 1796.)

Of all their many church friends, not one appears to have spoken a word of encouragement or sympathy, or to have lifted a hand to help.¹

But new friends soon gathered around him, including such names as Priestley, Franklin, and Price. He busied himself with his "Apology," and other writings which this led to; also with a series of studies and discussions of matters congenial, including a criticism of Gibbon, a history of Unitarianism, a reply to Robertson, a defense of Priestley. Tasks like these were spread over a period of nearly twenty years. But most permanent of his works was the founding of Essex Street Chapel, in 1778, which first organized Unitarian Dissent as a working force in the religious life of England. In this he was so well helped by friends and circumstances as to be both minister and part-proprietor of the chapel in which he served for fifteen years. He definitely relinquished the pulpit at the age of seventy, refusing ever to occupy it again, though he persevered in busy activities till near his death, in 1808, at the age of eighty-five. Three years before he had published "Conversations on the Divine Government," perhaps his most characteristic essay. In it he pleads for the essential goodness and justice of God as displayed in nature, and meets, by his ardent faith in a future state of discipline and purification, the question how evil—nay, such horrors as those of the Canaanitish conquest—may be permitted or even ordained by a righteous Sovereign of the world.

What had long been pretty widely held as individual opinion had now found a local habitation and a name. Within ten years after Lindsey's death "the great body" of those Presbyterian congregations not bound by the terms of their foundation to orthodox formularies were avowedly

¹ "Monthly Repository," December, 1808. (Letter of Mrs. Cappe.)

Unitarian.¹ In 1813 the old stigma of legal disabilities, which till then cast a shadow on the name, was blotted out. In 1825 the several provisional bodies established to spread and maintain the doctrine were merged in the British and Foreign Unitarian Association, which has its present headquarters in Essex Hall, once Theophilus Lindsey's chapel. It now represents between three and four hundred congregations, widely various in origin and name, that sustain its agencies at home and abroad. The only outside opposition that has seriously embarrassed them was that raised against their legal right to hold certain endowments or bequests (especially the "Lady Hewley's Charity" fund) given for religious as well as charitable uses, or the continued possession of their old meeting-houses.² The judicial decision was against both these rights; but the latter was determined in their favor by the "Dissenters' Chapels Act" of 1844. Since then Unitarians stand on an equal level of civil rights with every other religious body.

Down to this last date or near it—that is, for a term of about seventy years—English Unitarianism was well known by a form of doctrine, a style of Scripture exposition, and a type of the religious life pretty accurately defined and closely consistent with itself. It grew out of a movement of thought whose general course has now been traced, under conditions which became manifest as the main stream of the Reformation ran out into separate channels. Another period has followed since, in which old dogmas, arguments, and lines of sect are of less and less account. Within the limits thus defined, we have now to trace its doctrinal features, and the course of its

¹ "Encyclopædia Britannica." For the decline of Presbyterianism at this date, see "Monthly Repository" of 1813, p. 183; comparing 1809, p. 486.

² The points involved are very fully set forth in the "Monthly Repository" of July and September, 1817, pp. 430, 505.

denominational history. This will be best shown in a series of representative names.

Joseph Priestley (1733-1804), for forty years an intimate friend and correspondent of Lindsey, may be said almost alone to have shaped the system of opinion by which the Unitarianism of that period is best known. At the same time, with a fluency and versatility of composition almost unrivaled, he created a considerable body of literature, scientific as well as religious, much of which has value to this day. The forty-eight volumes of his works omit a considerable part of what he published in his lifetime. Besides these, a mass of correspondence, innumerable experiments, studies, and observations in natural science, and a very laborious career as teacher and preacher, witness the extraordinary activity of his mind.¹ He was in the front rank of chemists of his day, and did more, perhaps, than any other one man to carry that science over the steps that led directly to its reconstruction by Lavoisier and Dalton. He was the companion or correspondent of Franklin in his studies of electricity; an honored guest and associate among the men of science whom he visited in Paris. With his friend Dr. Richard Price he had an eager and hopeful interest in the earlier steps of the French Revolution; and was, under the charge of republicanism, mobbed and almost beggared in a frightful riot at Birmingham, in 1791. Coming to America in 1794, past the age of sixty-one, he corresponded with Jefferson and others on the latest ideas in political and social science. Through all, with a wonderful sweetness of temper and an intellectual courage equally rare,—“a heretic who was yet a saint,” as Huxley says of him,—he devoted himself to the one great purpose of his life, in developing, illustrating,

¹ A list of 108 of his published writings, including pamphlets but not his numberless magazine articles, fills eight pages of his memoir.

and defending his conception of religious truth. He declared himself a Christian among those scientists in Paris who told him he was the first man of sense they had seen that believed in God, and proved his faith as serenely in obloquy or exile as in the calm piety of his dying hours.

He was born near Leeds, of a Dissenting family rigidly orthodox and scrupulously pious; learned the Westminster Shorter Catechism by heart, and was taught to pray aloud in his own words at six. Losing his mother at that age, he was brought up by an aunt of austere Calvinistic faith, who helped him generously, as well, in his early schooling. At eleven he was experimenting on the breathing capacity of spiders. In the year or two following he was studying both Latin and Greek, and "rarely spent an hour for any recreation," though in this time he read most of Bunyan's works. His health, generally invulnerable, began (no wonder) to fail him here, and he was on the point of accepting a post in a commercial house at Lisbon. Recovering, we find him at seventeen dissuaded from studying Rabbinic lore, having already learned the biblical Hebrew, which he taught at eighteen. He had then, or a little later, read the Hebrew Bible twice through, and more. This he tells in self-defense against Horsley's slurs upon his learning. Seeking church-membership about this time, he was refused because he could not admit that all men are personally guilty in Adam's sin, having been influenced by one of his teachers, a "Baxterian." At twenty, with a fellow-student, he formed the practice of reading, in addition to their routine work, ten folio pages of Greek daily, besides a Greek play or two each month. Afterwards, when a teacher at a salary of thirty pounds, his hours of instruction were eleven a day; and holidays, except "red-letter days," seem to have been a thing unknown.

The twelve years from twenty-eight to forty were divided between the charge of the Dissenting academy at Warrington and a congregation at Leeds. His work as a preacher, which he had most at heart, was embarrassed by an hereditary defect of speech, which was a help to him, he says, by saving him from any ambition to shine in conversation or seek popular applause in the pulpit. While at Warrington he made the acquaintance of Dr. Price, whose liberalism in politics he warmly shared; and corresponded with Franklin (then in London), by whose advice he wrote a rapid but very successful history of discoveries in electricity. His Arianism had at first been a bar from the Dissenting pulpit, though he entered on his work at Leeds an avowed "Socinian"; and here he formed the intimate friendship with Lindsey which so strongly influenced the life-work of both.

He had been at twenty a student of Hartley's philosophy, which vividly illustrates by nerve-vibration the association of ideas, and so was already led towards that view of philosophical necessity which remained his belief through life and deeply tinged the early Unitarian theology. His Necessarianism was, however, a strictly religious doctrine, corresponding in a wide way with what we should call a Moral Order of the universe, or in a narrower way with what we call Laws of Mind, as distinct from spontaneous and wanton Freewill on one side, or a purely scientific Determinism on the other. Moral liberty of choice, under these conditions, it does not appear that (illogical or not) he ever let go. But the singular serenity of his faith he always ascribed to the firm hold which the Necessarian philosophy had upon his mind. At twenty-five he had relinquished the Calvinistic doctrine of Atonement; also, it would seem, that of Election, which his more orthodox

friends vainly tried to convince him was logically a part of his scheme of a Divine Necessity. His free commenting on the argument in some of Paul's Epistles had further brought rebuke from the learned apologist Lardner, with whom he conferred on the historical evidences of Christianity. These studies, with comparison of the Septuagint and the Hebrew text, mark his advance in doctrinal and critical theology up to the age of thirty-five.

During a seven years' engagement as librarian and tutor in the family of Lord Shelburne (1773-80) his reputation as an experimenter and discoverer in physics reached its height. Just then, his and Franklin's were the most shining names in that field of science. His careful study of certain conditions of organic life in a long series of experiments on air, and the deep sense of the "mystery of matter" which they induced, had effect in developing what is commonly called Priestley's materialism. It was, indeed, the natural sequence, and simplification, of his view of philosophical necessity. Like that, he held it as a strictly religious view. In our day we should state it in terms of the One Force familiar to the language of recent science. In substance (as has been remarked) his "materialism" differs only in terms from Berkeley's "idealism": each is simply a challenge of the "dualism" taught in our common speech. That mind and matter are two independent "substances" in the make-up of the human constitution, which he had thought at first, he dismissed as a metaphysical fiction. Scientifically, we have to do only with a single series of facts, in which body and soul are quite undistinguishable—at least, inseparable; and in this view he is undisturbed by any consciousness of a dualism implied in the notion of moral liberty. That view, it is true, denies the natural immortality of man as a conscious

person; but "he held, with an almost naïve realism, that man would be raised from the dead by a direct exertion of the power of God, and thereafter be immortal."¹

Priestley's residence in Birmingham, from 1780 to 1791, is the happiest and the culminating period of his intellectual life. In a retrospect written at the age of fifty-four he tells us something of his mental habits, and of the almost perfect nervous health which enabled him to do the work of a long life almost without an hour's loss from illness or pain or lack of sleep. We learn, too, of his easy rapidity of touch—he was early a master of shorthand—such that he dispatched a translation of Psalms, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes within a month; and that "besides his miscellaneous reading, which was at all times very great, he read through all the works quoted in his comparison of the different systems of Grecian philosophy with Christianity, composed that work, and transcribed the whole of it, in less than three months!" And we see him as a lecturer, "a man of about middling stature, slenderly made, remarkably placid, modest, and courteous, pouring out with the simplicity of a child the great stores of his most capacious mind."

He had expressed in a political essay some approval of the republican theory of government (though wholly loyal to his own), and had admitted the right of revolution under a desperate tyranny. This, in the temper of that day, was enough to confound him with the French revolutionary madness. In May, 1791, came an outburst of blind mob fury sharpened by ecclesiastical bigotry and hate. His chapel was burned. His house, which the mob tried to set on fire by sparks from his own electrical machine, was wrecked. His furniture, library, and "the most truly valuable and useful apparatus of philosophical

¹ Huxley's "Address at Birmingham in 1891," p. 18.

instruments," he says, "that perhaps any individual in this or any other country was ever possessed of," were totally destroyed. The money loss he reckoned at more than \$150,000, of which a small part was afterwards recovered. His life was saved by flight to London, with his wife, traveling painfully by night. All chances of occupation were hazardous while the reactionary fury lasted. And so, in 1794, at the age of sixty-one, relinquishing a modest lectureship at Hackney, he removed with his family to America. His latter days were spent in Northumberland, Pa., in the hope that his children might grow up near a projected liberty-loving colony, which never came to birth; and here he died in 1804. "His theological assailants in England had echoed, perhaps prompted, the vilest execrations of the Birmingham mob. Edmund Burke, with superfluous disdain, refused to answer or even to notice an appeal for justice in behalf of this ecclesiastical outlaw. At a local gathering of clergy (we are told) one man said that he would gladly set the torch with his own hand to a pile of Priestley's writings, and burn the author alive with them; and the rest, applauding, declared themselves ready to do the same. Such was the insolence of theologic hate in England a hundred years ago!"¹

The immediate successor of Priestley in his work at Hackney was Thomas Belsham (1750-1829), who also followed Lindsey in Essex Street a few years later, and thus becomes a link between the past and the living generation. Born and bred among the orthodox Dissenters, he was the first of that body to resign a position of trust and influence to join the Unitarians, at a time when, as he said, "a Socinian is still a sort of monster in the world." He did this not under any pressure that especially galled his conscience, since the conditions of his office as head of

¹ From an address delivered in Philadelphia in February, 1886.

they should copy out and classify the texts for or against the doctrine under discussion; to his own great surprise, and reluctantly, he self slowly drawn over to the new belief, and he nger serve with a neutral or divided mind. rdy honesty, with much industry and a fair learning, made Mr. Belsham's strength and a certain eminence among his fellows. More of them, he was known as a controversial advo- : Unitarian doctrine; more than most of them, l to rationalize it. Some among them were holding that Christ in person was agent of the in creating the universe. Others, still calling : Arians, held that he may be regarded as the he earth, and possibly of the entire solar system. rided to him only a shadowy and (so to speak) existence. But all such, he thought, could not y regarded as Unitarians, holding as he did "the d proper humanity of Christ." There was in his arently, a reaction from the anxious and brood- pection that meets us in the religious journal he sly kept in his earlier years. The "indwelling" y which Doddridge had disguised from himself from orthodoxy repelled the more blunt and

on the other part, by the increasing tendency of his time to "infidelity," or open rationalism. His best known literary work was done as chief editor of the "Improved Version of the New Testament," which exhibits and defends the Unitarian criticism of its day;¹ and in a translation with exposition of Paul's Epistles, which he holds to be only in small part doctrinal, mostly for practical teaching and edification. Of far narrower range than Priestley, he adopted in general the same views, including, with some demur, that of philosophical necessity, which he expresses in the proposition that all events are brought to pass by "one governing Will." His name is held, perhaps not quite justly, to stand for that highly respectable but frigid and formal piety which Unitarianism in his day was commonly supposed to be.

That this estimate of it was narrow and unjust we have the best proof possible in the honored and beloved name of Lant Carpenter (1780-1840), whose life of sixty years brings to a fit close this period of our history. Unlike all the others who have been named, he was born and educated among influences purely Unitarian. Owing to his father's failure in business, he was adopted by a maternal relative, a liberal Dissenter of Kidderminster, in whose household a native sweetness and vivacity of temper won to him warm affection from the beginning. The trait which most distinguished him through life was a certain moral genius in the work of education, with an eager and painstaking fidelity that gave him a singular influence with the young. Among the memories of his childhood,

¹ Unitarians generally have been made somehow responsible for this version, with which they appear, on the contrary, to have been "egregiously disappointed" (see "Monthly Repository" for December, 1808). It was blamed for taking as a basis, instead of Wakefield's, Archbishop Newcomb's translation, which follows the text of Griesbach, and then departing from that text in numerous cases, of which a list is given in the "Repository." It soon met the fate of other revised versions, falling completely into disuse.

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are *our only guide*." To this literalism appears a single qualification: that (on the ground of a doubt whether the first two chapters of the Testament make part of the gospel as originally written) the story of the birth of Jesus is interpreted as a natural event, though revealed in a halo of mystery and miracle. This view is taken in his "Harmony of the Gospels," the maturest labor of his life.

The double burden of a large family school with his important parish charge in Bristol, added to public responsibilities which he could not avoid, was slowly—nay, swiftly—undermining his life. While his father lived to ninety-five, he was an old man at fifty. To secure time for the tasks he had most at heart, he would go to his study at four o'clock in the morning, especially in winter when he enjoyed the quiet most, and appear at breakfast with a radiant face, saying, "I have been with our Lord in Galilee this morning!" But then came the unescapable burden of the day's instruction, and the weight of other cares; for he was a most faithful and tender pastor, and one of the most copious of correspondents. It was inevitable that his strength should break down, once and again, in sickness threatening to be fatal. As he approached his sixtieth year, the end of his working day seemed to have come. His last journey was undertaken to secure a year of rest in southern Europe. Sailing from Naples in a coasting steamer, he was washed or fell overboard in a storm at night, two months before he reached the age of sixty.

The events of the long Continental struggle (1793–1815), with the changes that slowly came about in the condition of the laboring classes, had powerfully turned the religious minds of England to political and social questions. This influence was, perhaps, most strongly felt among the Nonconformists, and of these, chiefly among the most

liberal. We have seen how Priestley and Price had been identified with the revolutionary party. At a later day, the correspondence both of Belsham and of Dr. Carpenter often shows the close relations they were drawn into with leading statesmen by the common interest in liberal politics. This interest was much quickened by the steps taken in 1813 to relieve Unitarians from the legal disabilities they still lay under. Then, having gained this relief, they were generously eager to aid in the measures that brought about the Catholic emancipation of 1829. In these efforts, in the work of general education, in the abolition of such oppressive burdens as the window tax and the restrictions upon labor-union, in negro emancipation, in temperance legislation, and the repeal of the scandalous "Contagious-Diseases Act," the names of leading Unitarians have been honorably prominent. Among the terrors of the riot in Bristol that grew from the reactionary fury against the Reform Act of 1832, Dr. Carpenter appears conspicuous as advocate, witness, or narrator,—not going out of his professional sphere, but listened to in it with deep respect, and carrying weight in high political circles by the simple authority of his name. The religious body he was connected with now felt itself respected and influential, numerous enough to assure itself of a rapid growth and a power for righteousness which it has never quite reached; and of a hold upon the future, as a strong and united body, which at this day it can scarce venture any longer to look forward to.

What honorable rank it had won in the world of letters is best seen in such names as those of William Roscoe, Samuel T. Coleridge, John Bowring, and a few others, brilliant pioneers of a more brilliant day that has followed. How well Dr. Carpenter's own work has been carried on by his children, especially in the contributions of Dr.

William B. Carpenter to scientific ethics, and of Mary Carpenter in practical philanthropy, is well known. The most familiar type of the thought and life associated with Unitarian forms of piety is perhaps to be found in a group of highly cultivated women, whose names have been household words to more than one generation: Catherine Cappe, Helen Maria Williams, Lucy Aikén, Anna Lætitia Barbauld, Maria Edgeworth, Joanna Baillie, Harriet Martineau, Sarah Flower Adams. Their form of piety has more of the serenity, the cheerful gravity, and the ethical glow of the religious life than of its depth, passionate contrition, or ecstatic rapture; and it is more readily associated with household affections, practical moralities, and the plain duties of every day, than with the great heroic enterprises of Christian faith. There was thus danger in it of a narrowing, even hardening tendency, of which the finest spirits would be soonest aware.

Yet this peril, even if it were real, has been much exaggerated in unfriendly judgments. In the words of a near and intelligent student of the religious movement we have traced, "In spite of the apparent materialism which made the editors of a Warrington hymn-book (somewhere in the twenties) boast of having avoided the term *soul*, as a word calculated to rouse unpleasant associations, there was a deep and earnest and unpretending piety. There was, however," he continues, "a great difference in denominational zeal between those who had, as descendants of the early English Presbyterians, gradually become Unitarians, and those who—like Lindsey and Belsham and Aspland—came over from the Church or the Calvinistic Nonconformists. The latter initiated the movement for the Unitarian name; they first designated chapels as Unitarian; they began to institute 'closed trusts,' which were opposed to the Presbyterian principle, and have

been a trouble ever since. The general attitude of non-subscribing Presbyterians is sketched by the Rev. J. J. Tayler in his 'Retrospect of the Religious Life of England'; and some important applications of their principles are made by Dr. Martineau in his letters to Mr. Macdonald."¹

The tendency to a stricter denominationalism, with perhaps a too easy self-content, was suddenly broken near the end of the period we have now surveyed. A challenge wonderfully different in tone was sounded; an intellectual horizon was opened up vastly broader than anything we have thus far found. Early in the year 1836 was published "The Rationale of Religious Inquiry," a thin volume of six lectures by James Martineau. This book, little but precious, struck the keynote of the higher criticism that has been followed out since in many lines of thought. The writer was a young preacher, then settled in Liverpool, a man of thirty-one, educated first for the profession of civil engineering, who had come with singular intellectual freshness, wealth, and courage into the field of theology; who had relinquished a Dublin pulpit, choosing at twenty-six the independence of a laborious and doubtful self-support before the government grant his congregation were entitled to receive; whose riper philosophical studies had led him away from the conventional Necessarianism of the English Unitarians of that day,—though in retracting that earlier view he gave to it (in the "Liverpool Lectures" of 1839) probably the finest literary exposition it has ever had, in an argument on Moral Evil.

Those who are old enough to have caught the first tones of that new voice will remember how it was instantly recognized as the voice of an intellectual leader, and with what interest every step has been watched in the long

¹ Reprinted in "Essays, Reviews, etc.," vol. ii., pp. 371, 381.

and brilliant career that has followed. The series covers fifty-eight years of successive publications, each as fresh, as vigorous, and as independent as the first.

Taking up the "Rationale" at this day, we note that it accepts, and puts forward with sharp relief, the then accepted division-line of Christian and Deist: whether or not Christianity is to be received as a dispensation of miracle. In the school which Dr. Martineau represents, this division-line has been so long left behind as to have been for more than forty years lost quite out of sight: this was shown, in 1850, by the generous and cordial recognition he gave to Theodore Parker as a Christian thinker. With an exaltation of the person of Christ very rare in so keen a critic, he maintains in 1853, against Professor Newman, that "we rest our Christianity on that moral perfection of Jesus which he arraigns"; while in 1890, denying that Jesus claimed to be the Messiah, he says, simply, that "in the sphere of Divine things, the requirement is that he *be better*" than we, and "make more approach to the supreme Perfection."¹ During a residence in Germany in 1848-49, he became a master in the fields of modern philosophy and criticism, developing a marked increase in breadth and force. A series of critical papers of extraordinary brilliancy and power—of which we may here note those on the Creed and the Ethics of Christendom—have covered most fields of modern philosophical inquiry. His contributions to purely religious thought, of profoundest and probably most lasting value, have appeared in discourses entitled "Endeavours after the Christian Life" and "Hours of Thought," which in their quality of intellectual exposition of the deeper religious experience may almost be said to constitute a class by themselves. What is rarest, even in so extended a career, is to have had the opportu-

¹ "Essays," etc., vol. iii., p. 55; "Seat of Authority," p. 651.

ppily too soon¹ to survey Dr. Martineau's intellectual whole, or to pass a critical judgment upon it. For present purpose, it is enough to say that it is by most rich and important systematic contribution by a single hand to the literature of thought of a religious body with which he has been associated. More than any other of its intellectual leaders, he is impatient of the limitations that seem to be put out it by a name taken from the lists of controversy, refusing to join publicly in the work of a "Presbyterian" organization, or to contribute a paper to a "Presbyterian" review. Rather, he would recall and claim for himself the historic title "Presbyterian," carefully avoiding it from being either a doctrinal sect on the one hand or the other a loose aggregate of ill-trained popular preachers. His sympathies are widely apart from those of the churches that seek for it a greater denominational influence, possibly, a wider field of real service and influence. Standing aside from all such efforts, he has been an actual guide and instructor as no other man has could be. While his near associates have been men like John James Tayler and James Drummond—of great learning and ability, his name alone adequately represents the course the higher liberal thought has taken.

In what form English Unitarianism will survive changes so radical, whether as an organized body or as an intellectual force, it is too soon to forecast. We have already seen those features of it which have perceptibly influenced the parallel development in America. In respect of numbers, it does not greatly vary from what it was half a century ago, counting, in 1893, 344 congregations and 356 ministers. Its two strong points, as a healthy living force, are: that its ablest men heartily accept the results of scientific investigation in physics, history, or criticism; and that the body of it is pervaded by a deep and powerful sympathy with what is best in the political and social aspiration of the day, which is now perhaps the most important single factor in British politics. But whether these two tend together as a source of strength to the Unitarian body, as such, is open to question. "The critical movement," again to copy from the writer before quoted, "is wholly opposed to denominationalism and ecclesiastical zeal. It necessarily fosters Broad Church views of the inadequacy of all formulæ, of the necessity of compromise in worship, and the rest. Hence the militant Unitarians do not care at all for historic and critical inquiries, and they profoundly mistrust all philosophy. On the other hand, the ethical sentiment, being precisely what links us to other bodies by a common philanthropy, is also unfavorable to the maintenance of narrow lines of ecclesiastical organization. It pleads for union and coöperation with other bodies to the utmost possible extent; it sinks all differences of creed or church life, if given moral ends can be secured." Under such conditions the body must survive, if at all, not as an independent force, but as a single battalion, serving under its special discipline, in an immensely greater host. But this is prophecy, not history.

CHAPTER VIII.

ANTECEDENTS IN NEW ENGLAND.

WHAT is called the Unitarian movement in New England belongs, strictly, to the last century and a half, since the Great Awakening of 1735. But to explain the direction and character taken by this current of religious thought, it is necessary to look back for a moment to the first founding of the colonies, and to note, in particular, the non-dogmatic forms of covenant under which their earlier churches were gathered. Of these forms it will be sufficient here to copy three: those, namely, of the First Church in Plymouth (1620), the First Church in Salem (1629), and the First Church in Boston (1630). These three churches are all now known as Unitarian, and each exists at this day under its original covenant. That in Plymouth, it is true, was revised in 1676; but this was done without changing in the least its character or substance.

In Bradford's "History" (p. 6) it is related that the Pilgrims at Plymouth "as the Lord's free people joyned them selves into a church estate, in the fellowship of the gospell, to walke in all [God's] wayes made known or to be made known unto them, according to their best endeavour, whatever it should cost them." In the later revision the covenant is given thus: "We do hereby solemnly and religiously, as in his most holy presence, avouch the Lord Jehovah, the only true God, to be our God and the God of ours; and do promise and bind ourselves to walk in all

our ways according to the rule of the gospel, and in all sincere conformity to his holy ordinances, and in mutual love and watchfulness over one another, depending wholly upon the Lord our God to enable us by his grace hereunto."

That of the church in Salem reads: "We covenant with the Lord and with one another, and doe bynd our selves in y^e presence of God, to walke together in all his waies, according as he is pleased to reveale himself unto us in his Blessed word of truth." In the additions of 1636, which follow, the "waies" of practical piety are defined at some length, without the insertion of a single point of controverted doctrine.¹

The First Church in Boston declares, after a brief preamble, as follows: "We . . . do hereby solemnly and religiously promise and bind ourselves to walk in all our ways according to the rule of the gospel, and in all sincere conformity to [Christ's] holy ordinances, and in mutual love and respect each to other, so near as God shall give us grace." At the first signing, this covenant bore only the four names of John Winthrop, Thomas Dudley, Isaac Johnson, and John Wilson, the three leading laymen of the colony, and its first minister.

These earliest documents show, in the first place, why it was that New England Unitarianism was not (like the English) a secession, but an offshoot or development, from the original Congregational order: doctrinal dissent, or nonconformity, was never called for; and secondly, how all agree in recognizing, as the tribunal of last appeal, not church authority, or any form of creed, but the direct guidance of the Spirit of Truth present to the individual

¹ Hurd's "History of Essex County." See especially the discussion as to what constituted the original covenant, and whether it was accompanied by a confession of belief, as presented by Rev. E. B. Willson, pp. 24-27.

—which opened the second era of colonial life. This was the first intrusion of the modern secular into the conduct of the colonial church, and was upon it by the political circumstances of the time.

Understand, of course, that there was a body of generally if not universally received among the churches. This, indeed, has made the standard rigid orthodoxy, by which all departures from it were judged, quite down to our own day. Colonial estrain "heresy," passed in 1646 and in 1697, formally abolished by the Bill of Rights in the settings Constitution of 1780. The exaggerated of the Free Spirit, proclaimed by Ann Hutchinson, held the colony distracted till her cruel expulsion years later. About 1650 William Pynchon published the Meritorious Price of Man's Redemption," a vindicating the sufferings and sacrifice of Christ most dangerous Scriptureless tenent, that is held Mr. Norton, of New England, in his book of

essential provision of the "Half-way Covenant" was that children baptized, though unregenerate, may be baptized, "their parents covenant." Its terms are stated in "The Spirit of the Pilgrims" : (1) the duty of all baptized persons "to own the covenant,"

'Christ's Sufferings,' affirming that he suffered the essential torments of hell and the second death from God's immediate vindictive wrath"; asserting, on the contrary (p. 309), that his death was a *priestly* act, in which he offered up his own life as ransom for the guilty. For this advance upon the somber theology of our fathers, the book was burned, and its author was punished by a fine of a hundred pounds.

The constitution and polity of the colonial churches had been carefully defined in the "Cambridge Platform" of 1648, as a measure of defense against the Presbyterian party hitherto dominant in the Long Parliament. Their doctrinal standard was of far later date; it was not formally announced till 1680. In that year a synod of elders and delegates, representing five New England colonies, was held in Boston, which drafted a "Confession of Faith" in thirty-two chapters, copied in substance from that of the Westminster Assembly, as abridged by the Independents in the "Savoy Confession" of 1658.¹ This declaration could not, however, be imposed as a creed upon the churches, which simply adopted such portions of it as they thought fit into their several covenants. The theory of independency might not be denied. As a consequence of the restoration of Charles II., the colonies had been forced to admit to equal citizenship, and hence as qualified for church communion, "all persons orthodox in their opinions and not vitious in their lives." From this came the lax terms of membership in the "Half-way Covenant" of 1662, and opening of church doors to the unregenerate. From this, again, arose the compromising theory that the Lord's Supper is of itself a "converting ordinance," and that hence "profane persons ought to be admitted to

¹ Given in Mather's "Magnalia," vol. ii., pp. 157-178. See "The Panoplist," vol. iii., p. 13.

partake of it." This theory was vigorously attacked by Increase Mather, in a small volume directed against Solomon Stoddard; and again at a synod in 1689, where he remonstrated against "men of known unregeneracy sharing in the tremendous mysteries" of that sacramental act.

The effect most dreaded at this period would appear to have been less the spread of doctrinal heresy than the secularizing of church life. "Doth not a careless, remiss, flat, dry, cold, dead frame of spirit grow upon us secretly, strongly, prodigiously?" so asks, sadly, a minister of the elder time, in 1669. Royal authority was unfriendly to the old ecclesiastical rule. Conditions of social life were altered from the former rude simplicity. Natural leaders in the young State—jurists, publicists, or men of letters—cared more for political rights than for church theology. Against this danger—illustrated at all points in the remarkable career of John Wise, "Father of American democracy" (1652–1725)—the barrier of a stricter ecclesiasticism was set up. In 1700 the plan of a "national church" was urged, to confirm the shaken authority. In 1705 a system of "associations" and "standing councils" was adopted. In 1708 the "Saybrook Platform" established in Connecticut a method of "Consociation," or local presbytery, which never got footing beyond the boundaries of that province. An ecclesiastical machinery of some little dignity and strength was thus constructed, which held in moderate check the laxness of Independency, and was in a good number of cases effective in setting bounds to the Boston liberal theology of a later day.

Meanwhile, the change of the colonial charter in 1692 had brought in, along with royal governors and new distinctions of rank, increased circulation of English books. The discussions of Sherlock, South, Whiston, Clarke, and others came to be widely known. Among the rest, writ-

ings of Thomas Emlyn, the amiable witness and sufferer of that day for the Unitarian faith, had a large currency and a special influence. Dr. Sprague, in his "Annals of the American Pulpit," records the lives of forty-nine ministers of known Unitarian belief settled in Congregational churches during the eighteenth century. The list begins with the seventy years' pastorate (1717-87) of the excellent and eccentric Dr. Ebenezer Gay, of Hingham, who has been called "the Father of American Unitarianism"—a graduate at eighteen of Harvard College, who received its doctor's degree at eighty-nine, and died in his ninety-second year; and includes the name of James Freeman, the terms of whose settlement at King's Chapel, in 1785, virtually transferred that noble foundation from the Episcopal to the Congregational body. To these we should add the name of Lemuel Briant, minister of Braintree from 1747 to 1752, citing the evidence of the elder President Adams, who, "discussing in 1815 the principles of the new departure, found in them nothing that was not familiarly known to him, and bore testimony to the fact that sixty-five years before, Lemuel Briant was a Unitarian."¹ It may be noted, however, that the controversy at that day turned chiefly on the Atonement and the conditions of the moral life, and so was known as "Arminian," not specially as antitrinitarian.

These evidences of a great latitude of opinion, tolerated and allowed for without any break in the Congregational order, will be easily understood from what has been said of the character of the church covenants. It had much to do, besides, with the deepening interest in political affairs, as we approach the period of open conflict with the mother-country. Indeed, it might almost be said that every man

¹ "Three Episodes in the History of Massachusetts," by Charles F. Adams, p. 643.

the growing laxity of opinion did not come without sharp remonstrance from the more zealous of the elder creed.¹ Thus we hear, in 1719, of "opposition to the abominable errors of Arius." Cotton's convention sermon in 1722 complains that "it preach much about the person of Christ, after the manner of the Church-of-England men"; in 1726 William Williams, in less polemic mood, ordinated controversy "to set forth the glory of the main and essential part of our work." Jonathan Edwards, at Northampton in 1734, is uneasy at the prevalence of "Arminianism," which he thinks to betoken a neutral temper in the religious life. And the reaction under his powerful impulse, occurs the wonder-working of "the Great Awakening," with extravaganzas that followed, and the "strange transports and caldevotional devotions," which are generally held, by the people invited, to have led the way to the liberal movement that followed.

And if this counter-movement was, we find evidence of the visits of George Whitefield to Boston, in 1740, and in 1754. In the first, fresh as he was from Calvinism in the great work of Jonathan Edwards, he

seemed to carry all before him, and gave his farewell discourse on Boston Common to a crowd of twenty thousand eager listeners. In the second, the scene is already changed. Edwards's "Thoughts" and Chauncy's "Seasonable Thoughts" on the great revival have intervened. Criticism is in the ascendant. A demand for "discipline" has displaced the heated enthusiasm. The reaction has now set in, which six years later drove Edwards from his home in Northampton to his Stockbridge exile among the Indians. At his third visit, in 1754, Whitefield finds no response in Boston. A new gospel of reason has been for eight years installed in the West Church pulpit by Mayhew, the boldest preacher of his day. The spirit of the time is "hostility to creeds." The cry of "Arminian," "Socinian," "Antinomian," has been heard without alarm. The writings of Thomas Emlyn are diligently studied. We have in full view that "weakness of the pulpit" (with the notable exception of Mayhew) which has been recorded as one symptom of the coming political revolution. The New England clergy, as Whitefield in his wrath had candidly said of them, were "dumb dogs, half devils and half beasts, unconverted, spiritually blind, and leading their people to hell!"

Charles Chauncy, minister of the First Church in Boston for sixty years, till his death, in 1787—a scholar, an ardent patriot, a political reformer, and a ready controversialist—was eminently the intellectual leader at this period in the new advance towards a rational theology. But its most effective popular champion was Jonathan Mayhew, pastor of the West Church from 1747 till his early death, in 1766. He was born in 1720, a child of brave descent. His ancestors for four generations had been rulers, teachers, and civilizers among the Indians. The first Thomas Mayhew (1592–1682), a citizen of Watertown, Mass., had received

istrate and true friend, devoted himself at seventy
ng on his son's work as preacher of the gospel,
s walking as much as twenty miles in a day to
service. Though twenty-fold the number of the
pon the island, the Indians of his charge could
drawn to take part in the somber horror of King
War; and the old man died in peace, lacking six
r of ninety years. The good work was continued
randson John, and then by Experience, father of
eloquent and famous Jonathan.

g fresh from such a field, the younger Mayhew
with him a spirit of almost haughty independence,
as quickly manifest. From the outset he pro-
e right and duty of private judgment. At his
it in Boston the more cautious of the clergy held
d he was installed by a council gathered from
parishes. He would not follow the customary
of seeking membership in the Boston Association
ers, and never took part in the Thursday Lecture,
lished a more attractive weekly series of his own.
ficant that his doctor's degree came to him from
1. He was, it is said, "the first clergyman in
gland who expressly and openly opposed the

Already when a student at college he had been revolted by the extravagances of a revival. Under the influence (it is said) of Dr. Gay, of Hingham, he had then chosen the cooler way of reason. Thus he rejected the doctrine of "irresistible grace"; he doubted the entire creed of orthodoxy; he held the doctrine of freewill, taking the Arminian part in the burning controversy of the day. "Creed-making" he held in scorn. A vicarious atonement and an imputed righteousness he vehemently denied. Persecution for opinion's sake he hated. "A burning fagot," he said, "has no tendency to illuminate the understanding;" in the popular way of revivals "men are converted—only out of their own wits; . . . to attempt to dragoon men into sound orthodox Christians is as unnatural as to attempt to dragoon them into good poets, physicians, or mathematicians." Christianity, according to him, is not a scheme of salvation, to be defined by dogma, but "the art of living virtuously and piously."

These phrases give hint of a temper sometimes hasty and disdainful, but in the main nobly independent. It is no wonder that his gospel of freedom soon ran out in the line of political rights and duties, or that he became the near friend and adviser of such ardent patriots as Samuel Adams, James Otis, and other pre-revolutionary leaders. Zeal for theological controversy gave way, step by step, before interest in public events. Among the topics of discourse which he carried into the pulpit are such as these: the death and character of Frederick, Prince of Wales; the anniversary of the beheading of Charles I., which he takes as occasion for a plea against ecclesiastical apologies for despotism; the taking of Quebec; the accession of George III. The discussion that best shows his vigor of attack and retort was called out by an effort made by certain Episcopalian ministers to get Episcopacy recognized as an

Archbishop of Canterbury, who had incautiously
d in the debate. A personal controversy with Mr.
and, of Ipswich, in which he resents the charge of
rationist heresy in the phrase that punishment may
the good of the offender," is less creditable to his
nt or temper. Dying at the age of forty-six, a
fore the crisis of the political revolution which his
ous spirit hailed in advance, he left a fame far wider
re enduring than any of his associates.

ew's successor in the West Church, Simeon How-
57-1804), continued the line of dissent from the
d creed, being esteemed an Arian. He was a man
est, serious, and even temper, in character generous
right, highly esteemed for scholarship, and as a
greatly loved. In his time that church was nearly
l by the storm of the Revolution. While he took
in Halifax, Nova Scotia, "the house he preached
turned into a barrack, and his congregation dis-
in every direction." Those were not days of
cal interest or advance. "The divinity of Christ,"
ned Andrew Croswell, speaking at that time, "is
uated doctrine, very unfashionable and unmodish."
Christian," responded Tucker of Newbury, in

"foreign errors are to be met by argument alone, not by crowding down creeds and confessions upon pain of eternal punishment." The climax of this period of indifferentism was reached in the presidency of Joseph Willard (1781-1804), an Arminian in creed, who corresponded with friends of Voltaire in France as well as Priestley and Price in England, in whose time it was a common saying that "the Boston ministers have agreed to differ." At the end of the century we are told: "It is confidently believed that there was not a strict trinitarian clergyman of the Congregational order in Boston."

Nor was this temper of mind confined to professed theologians. Among the anecdotes of the revolutionary period, it is told that Timothy Pickering, of Salem,—eminent alike as a soldier, a jurist, a statesman, and in later years as a bitter Federalist partisan,—once heard Baron Steuben say, while campaigning on the Hudson, that he "would as soon believe the doctrine of the trinity" as some tale that had just been told him. This set the serious young adjutant to thinking, and he became one of the lay promoters of a very notable theological movement in his native town.¹

The liberal movement in Salem is associated chiefly with three very eminent names among its ministers. Of Thomas Barnard, of the North Church (1773-1812), it is said that he was a man of strong character and remarkable personal influence. This latter quality was shown in his effective mediation, in 1775, between a British officer and young Timothy Pickering, who, with his militia guard, claimed *and kept* possession of certain weapons which the authorities sought to detain. But this great personal influence was neutral as to those matters of dispute that

¹ For an interesting sketch of this movement see two papers at the close of a volume entitled "Social Equilibrium," etc., by Rev. George Batchelor.

name of John Prince, of the First Church (1779—
was more familiar, through his long ministry of
ten years, to men of a younger generation. He
was of scientific turn of mind, of gentle and kindly
of easy liberality in belief and practice. Thus he
was interested in the reading and circulating of English
books, and—what was a rare thing to do among
Congregational clergy of that day—he opened his pul-
pit in 1787 to John Murray, the pioneer of Universalism
in America. Through this mild easiness of disposition he
was one of those who, when controversy comes, are readily
guilty of evasion or concealment.

One of the most remarkable and most independent of the
“liberal” Salem ministers was William Bentley, of
the First Church (1783–1819), who was called to his place
as tutorship of mathematics in Harvard College. He
was an brusquely independent, discarding both the creed
and the great wig “which was its symbol.” He discon-
tinued the Friday’s “preparatory lecture,” then custom-
ary before communion Sunday. He sympathized frankly
with the English Unitarians, holding Priestley’s tracts to be
the best vindication of their doctrine. Yet he sharply
opposed the divisions in the Congregational body, and scorn-

two sermons a week, without break, for six-and-thirty years. He was among the first to accept the later Unitarian expositions of the *Logos*, and was earlier than Channing to oppose the orthodox dogma of native depravity in human nature. He was far in advance of his day in accepting the spirit of modern democracy, and did not at all shun to be called by such names of contumely as "Jacobin," "Democrat," or "Jeffersonian infidel." An anecdote shows his daring, popular, and ready temper. During the War of 1812 word was brought to him in the pulpit one Sunday morning that the frigate "Constitution" had taken refuge at Marblehead, four miles away, threatened by British cruisers. Instantly dismissing the congregation, he headed a party of relief, riding (says one account) on a gun-carriage. Whether or not deterred by the signs of resistance, the cruisers sailed away; upon which, returning as promptly as he had gone, he thrilled his audience with an impromptu patriotic discourse on the text, "There go the ships!" Dr. Bentley was, furthermore, master of learning extremely rare in his day. He was said to be "expert in at least twenty-one languages," and such an adept in calligraphy that manuscript copies made by him, in Greek, Hebrew, and Arabic, are models of that elegant art. Thus distinguished as a scholar, he yet declined the presidency of a college in Vermont, choosing the homelier tasks of his parish ministry. A man of warm temperament, an eager partisan of the most popular political creed, a fluent newspaper correspondent, a devoted pastor and friend, his last act was to visit a sick parishioner on a bitter December day; and then, returning to his fireside, he dropped dead as he opened his lips to give some direction to his attendant.

A still more characteristic influence working in Salem to the same general effect was that of merchants and ship-

4, that Nathaniel Bowditch worked out the calculations which gave to his "Practical Navigator" its pre-eminence and authority among books of its class. Professor Benjamin Peirce, ranked as the profoundest genius among American mathematicians, was grandson of a Salem ship-builder. The most eminent local names were those distinguished in that line of commercial adventure; and of almost all the more prominent—twenty, it is said, twenty-four—were to be found in the Unitarian congregations. Men of their order of intelligence were to be impressed by contact with old-world civilization and alien faiths. The supercargo of the first ship traded in those waters is related to have volunteered to give a defense of Mohammedanism. Others felt in a new manner the mental stimulus of foreign travel and adventure, so that the brighter intelligence of New England lost its provincial quality, along with whatever was rigid in its Puritan tradition. It is a ^{water} ~~city~~ of Salem, that Rantoul, whom we find at a later day in correspondence with Rammohun Roy, touching the points of contact between Oriental and Western faiths. Thus "the liberalizing influence upon the old Puritan theology exerted in that community through its navigators, even more than through its critics and theologians. As soon

them they brought home the germs of a broad religion of humanity."

The event of chief note in the half-century we have now traced was that act of the proprietors of King's Chapel, in Boston, by which (in the language of its minister, Dr. Greenwood) "the first Episcopal Church in New England became the first Unitarian Church in America." On the 19th of June, 1785, it was voted, twenty against seven, to strike out from the order of service whatever teaches or implies the doctrine of the trinity. This step was prepared for by a course of discussions on the true interpretation of Christian doctrine, conducted by James Freeman, who for about two years had been the "reader" of that church, and who two years later was formally installed as its pastor by the Vestry, acting under the general statutes of Massachusetts, the affiliated churches refusing their assent or fellowship. The change was further favored by the temper developed in the revolutionary struggle, when some of the royalist proprietors went into exile, and their places were filled by younger men. Mr. Freeman had had scruples on the point of lay ordination; but, hearing an English visitor—Rev. Mr. Hazlitt, father of the essayist—assert its validity, he replied, "I wish you could prove that, sir," and so entered into the argument, in which he was easily convinced. He soon became an active propagandist of Unitarian doctrine. He published a "Scripture Confutation of the Thirty-nine Articles"; distributed the writings of English Unitarians, including the gift of Priestley's works to Harvard College; and, without being an eager controversialist, was held in high esteem as a pioneer among the early Unitarian leaders, till his death, in 1835, at the age of seventy-six.

For some twenty years following the step taken at King's Chapel, the movement as it widens out is most

its order of worship, under the direction of its minister. Mr. Oxnard, found itself drawn into alliance with the movement; and this act was followed, about the same time, in the important town of Saco. In 1794 a similar union was taken in Plymouth and in Barnstable. Two years later are found scattered churches of known Unitarianism in the States of Connecticut, Rhode Island, Hampshire, Vermont, and Pennsylvania.¹ Priestley, himself, was warmly urged, in 1794, to settle as a Unitarian minister in both New York and Philadelphia, but led a retired life at Northumberland. Freeman, in 1795, speaks of "many churches in which the worship is Unitarian"; and we hear at the same date of an "sphere of doubt ("not concealed disbelief") touching disputed points of the popular theology. "Rejection of the trinity" would seem to be the one point of agreement among the Boston ministers; and Dr. Joseph Buckner, of Portsmouth, laments in 1799 a tendency that betrays the promise of its most brilliant representative greatly gifted son, who at fifteen has rejected the doctrine of native depravity, and doubts the trinity. In the year 1800 it comes to pass that, while no one Congregational preacher can fairly be called Unitarian, there is as yet "no line of demarkation."

"Arian," Emerson as "Unitarian," Kirkland as simply "liberal." Harvard College, founded to be the nursery of Puritan theology, is quite neutral, even helplessly so. Its president, Willard, has "no zeal"; Professor Pearson, "no influence"; Tappan is a "moderate Calvinist"; Popkin, a "Socinian." East of Worcester, seventy-five ministers out of two hundred may be reckoned "orthodox"; in Plymouth County, only two out of twenty; in Boston, one out of nine. This, however, can be counted as hardly more than a vague unrest. The old Congregational order is still unbroken. Buckminster, most ardent of the liberals, writes to Belsham in 1809: "Except in the little town of Boston and its vicinity, there cannot be collected from any space of one hundred miles six clergymen who have any conception of rational theology, and who would not shrink from the suspicion of antitrinitarianism in any shape." The "Monthly Repository" of 1812 (p. 200) complains of the extreme reticence of the Boston ministers, in contrast with their more outspoken English sympathizers. It was not only that they appreciated to the full their advantage as members in good standing of an established order; but at this period they honestly distrusted the radical tendencies pushing to the front in English Unitarianism, and did not choose to wear its name. Priestley's "materialism" was an object of vague, ignorant dread; and from Boston there had gone no word of greeting to him in his exile.

This period of silent and dull neutrality was broken, in 1805, by the appointment of Henry Ware as Hollis professor of divinity in Harvard College. He was now, at the age of forty-one, a modest country minister, settled in Hingham, Mass., a man of singularly blended sweetness of temper, austere integrity of conscience, and a touching humility of spirit, well known as siding with the liberal

ncy Adams, and John Farrar, in the chairs of rhetoric, and mathematics—all pointing the same way. These five appointments within two years made that conspicuously the headquarters of intellectual liberalism in America.¹

Alarm or anger felt by many at the attitude thus taken by the university naturally turned, in particular, to the election of the theological professor. The school had been founded in 1723 by Thomas Hollis, an English Dissenter, a Baptist, though not a Calvinist in the strict sense. It had been further endowed by the "John Levermore Legacy" of 1747 and strengthened by the "Fund" of 1657, both representing the well-known English theology. One of its conditions was incumbent should be of "sound and orthodox" opinion. On these grounds the election had been actively opposed by Professor Pearson, himself a "fellow"² of the school and a candidate for its presidency. It was now being attacked as a flagrant breach of trust by Nathaniel Morse, minister of Charlestown, in a pamphlet "Reasons" assigned for it. All the grounds he had been fully considered by the Corporation,

¹ "History of Harvard University," vol. ii., pp. 284-291.

which made answer "that this attempt to introduce a categorical examination into the creed of a candidate was a barbarous relic of Inquisitorial power, alien alike from the genius of our government and the spirit of the people; that Hollis, though agreeing with Calvinists in some points, was notoriously not a Calvinist; and that by his statutes he prescribed the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the rule of his professor's faith, and not the Assembly's Catechism."¹ On these grounds the authorities of the university rested, not taking any part in the somewhat virulent discussion that followed. As a direct result of the "gloom over the university" cast by this series of events, was the munificent foundation of the theological school at Andover, whose orthodoxy is protected by the periodical signing of its creed by each of its instructors.

The liberal party were, and are, justly tenacious of their right of membership in the historic Congregational order. In Massachusetts this has never been denied them. But in Connecticut the "consociation" was better able to deal with heresy. Here the process of separation, or exclusion, was already begun. In 1805 the minister of Mansfield, Mr. John Sherman (grandson of Roger Sherman), was deposed for free thinking on the subject of the trinity. He retired to a small congregation in Oldenbarneveldt (now Trenton), N. Y., where he served for some years, till he was drawn aside into journalism and politics. Five years later, at Coventry in Tolland County, Rev. Abiel Abbot was taken in hand by the consociation of that district; but, appealing to a "mutual council," withdrew under its advice by a voluntary resignation, and went to Peterborough, N. H., where he has left the record of a

¹ Quincy's "History," vol. ii., p. 285; compare p. 211; vol. i., pp. 168-170. The Henchman Legacy prescribes "the well-known confession of faith drawn up by a synod of churches in New England" (see above, p. 173); the Hopkins Fund is given "for the promotion of religion, science, and charity."

among the Congregational clergy, who have been so charged with concealment or evasion.

Account given a few years later by Dr. Channing of the most precise testimony we have as to the position of those afterwards ranked as Unitarian: "A majority of our brethren believe that Jesus Christ is more than man; that he existed before the world; that he literally came down from heaven to save our race; that he sustains other than man as teacher and witness of the truth; and that he still acts for our benefit and is our intercessor with God. Others reject the distinction of three Persons, and judge on system as to his nature and work. Some believe the simple humanity of Christ." "We are Unitarian," he says, "precisely as if no such doctrine as the Trinity had ever been known." "Non-biblical phrases do not divide us." "Should differences of opinion divide the vision of the church?—a solemn, infinitely important question." "We are vague, because we are faithful." "We are as far as possible from the temper of controversy. At that time, indeed, there was an almost passionate desire on the part of liberals, to escape from controversy. The dominant minds among them aimed to conduct the discussion on the neutral ground of scholarship and letters.

Unitarianism in the nineteenth century

tears,—was best known by his eloquent discourses on practical piety and by his eager studies in the criticism of the Greek Testament. For ten years together the points at issue were discussed alternately, like moves in a friendly game of chess, in the annual convention sermon—not by direct attack or defense of doctrine, but by defining the "essentials" of Christian faith. For once, in 1815, after the close of the war with Great Britain, Channing departed widely from theological bickering to political ethics, in a discourse on war and peace. Still the controversy emerged at other points.

In 1803 the "Anthology Club" was founded in Boston as a rallying-ground for those of known liberal sympathies, and presently became the recognized exponent of the new spirit. It consisted of fourteen members, six of them ministers, and its gatherings were for some years the most important social events in that community. In November appeared the first number of the "Monthly Anthology," the first literary and critical magazine of note in America. It was continued till June, 1811; and its ten volumes are still of interest for the contemporary notices they give of such topics as Scott's new poems and the total eclipse of 1806. Less space than we might expect is given to theological discussion. But, indirectly, the new views were made sharply prominent in a defense of the position of Harvard College (March, 1805) against Dr. Morse's "True Reasons"; in a discussion of the Sherman case (May, 1806); in a review of Griesbach's text and the Improved Version (in 1811); and especially in a very vigorous comment by Rev. S. C. Thacher on the position taken by the Andover school in demanding the periodical signing of a creed. These are the most important contributions of the "Anthology" to the literature of the liberal movement—disappointing those who would

several phases of the intellectual change coming in its day, became in its later years an independent, including topics of political ethics, general history, the higher criticism. All these journals rather than sought matter of controversy, giving far the place to questions of general moral or literary in-

sharp shocks broke the uneasy truce so studiously maintained. Elsham's "Life of Lindsey," of which he sent a present copy to Harvard College, contained a chapter on American Unitarianism," giving correspondence that showed a much closer alliance of several Boston liberals with the movement in England than they had been supposing to admit. The story got wind. In 1815 they saw the book, and caught gladly at the implication. "The veil was now torn away," and the liberals were compelled to accept, very reluctantly, the title. The reluctance was sincere, and not dissimulated. In their view, it was highly important, for the movement's sake, that the movement should be spontaneous, independent of sectarian by-words or party name. Their hand was forced. But the result was inevitable. If a party exist, it must carry its

own name "Unitarianism."

rian" was as little open to misconstruction as any other. It might come in time to be as broadly inclusive and honorable as any other.

The immediate effect was to wake a sudden sense of courage and strength. It had been asked, "Shall we have the Boston religion, or the Christian religion?" Answer was made—not by a theologian, but by a man of the world—in a very vigorous pamphlet with the title "Are you a Christian or a Calvinist?" The pamphlet was written by John Lowell, brother of the preacher and one of the corporation of Harvard University. The conflict was waged "without gloves," in wholesome plainness of speech. Impatient of a tame and apologetic defense, the writer takes the tone of attack. He vindicates the attitude of the university; turns the tables upon Dr. Morse; scorns all attempts at a show of ecclesiastical domination; reads a sound lecture from the history of intolerance; disdains the rule of association, council, or consociation, just as it had been refused by the good sense of Massachusetts a century before.¹ Such words as these cleared the dull air. Theologians caught a new tone of courage from their lay champion. This is the tone we hear in Channing's Baltimore sermon of 1819, the first clear voice that roused the Unitarians of America to understand what the position they had drifted into really meant. Unitarianism, when this discourse was published, was charged as pure rationalism. "We must choose," retorted Channing, "between rational Christianity and infidelity."

The second shock was from the decision rendered in 1820 by the Supreme Court of Massachusetts in the case of the parish at Dedham, from which a majority of the

¹ Nathaniel Emmons (1745-1840) said, in his sharp individualistic temper, "Association leads to Consociation, Consociation to Presbyterianism, Presbyterianism to Episcopalianism, and Episcopalianism to Popery."

is presumably the more secular party; it added
of wrong to the sense of loss.¹ It was, however,
sion of a lay tribunal, purely technical, and bear-
indirectly upon our proper topic. The general
f the period now brought to a close will be best
he words of Dr. Lyman Beecher, speaking of the
23) when he came to Boston: "All the literary
Massachusetts were Unitarian; all the trustees
essors of Harvard College were Unitarian; all the
wealth and fashion crowded Unitarian churches;
ges on the bench were Unitarian, giving decisions
n the peculiar features of church organization so
ordered by the Pilgrim Fathers had been nulli-
all the power had passed into the hands of the
tion."

ull and dispassionate statement of the case in a volume entitled
ism, Its Origin and History," made by Dr. G. E. Ellis, president
achusetts Historical Society (Boston: A. U. A.).

CHAPTER IX.

PERIOD OF CONTROVERSY AND EXPANSION.

THE Unitarians of Boston and its vicinity first felt the courage of their convictions, and knew where their real strength lay, when Channing delivered his celebrated discourse in Baltimore, on the 5th of May, 1819. At this time we may reckon the number of their churches as about one hundred and twenty in eastern Massachusetts, with nine or ten in the other New England States. Of these not one called itself Unitarian, and only one has adopted that name since.¹ The movement represented by it was, further, confined within extremely narrow local boundaries. A radius of thirty-five miles from Boston as a center would sweep almost the whole field of its history and influence. Outside of this, twelve or fifteen churches lay in a belt a little to the north, running as far back as to the Connecticut River; while the important towns of Portland, Portsmouth, Worcester, Providence, and New Bedford made its frontier stations. Baltimore and Charleston were distant outposts, established in 1817; New York and Springfield were added to the list in this very year.

Channing was now at the age of thirty-nine. He was best known, hitherto, as a fervent preacher of practical piety in the Boston pulpit: a man of slight personal pres-

¹ That in North Chelsea (Revere), which took the name in 1887. Of the twenty-nine Boston churches now known as Unitarian only four are so designated in their title. That name had been given, in 1819, only to the two founded by Priestley in Pennsylvania, at Northumberland (1794) and Philadelphia (1796).

been drawn into a very prominent position in the controversy with Dr. Samuel Worcester, when he pleaded assiduously for keeping the Congregational body unbroken and contended earnestly against some of its cardinal points of doctrine. When Jared Sparks (better known in the field of history) was installed minister of a church in Baltimore avowedly Unitarian, in a structure probably the noblest in its architecture that any American Protestant body could boast, Channing chose so early an occasion for appeal in a higher tone, to a far more extensive hearing, than any that had been had as yet. His discourse was not an argument addressed to theologians upon disputed points of doctrine, but an impeachment of the orthodoxy of that day at the bar of the popular reason and common sense. The terms in which he described it were regarded, even then, as exaggerated and unjust. Certainly many will doubt whether at this day a single reputable minister in America would profess the naked Calvinism he denounced.

The argument of the discourse, which has become historical, is cast in five divisions. First, it deals with the doctrine of the trinity, the perplexity it offers to the understanding, especially the confusion of thought as to

of Christ's double nature. Thirdly, it charges the moral paradox of the alleged conflict of justice and mercy in the Divine Nature, by which the reverence due to the Holy One is baffled and perplexed. Again, it dwells upon the moral enormity of a view of the Atonement which only exasperates and heightens the supposed conflict it claims to reconcile. Lastly, the true nature of Salvation is set forth as a moral or spiritual condition of the soul itself, and this is contrasted with the arbitrary "imputation" of another's righteousness. Channing, it may be charged, was not greatly learned in theology, not a master in metaphysics, not elaborately trained in controversy. No believer in the trinity that ever lived, it may be, would admit his statement of it to be correct. But no man ever put more cogently than he the plain language of reason and conscience as it goes out to the common mind. For the purpose of his argument this was enough. It was enough, too, for the style of debate with which he had to deal. Even so scholarly an opponent as Professor Stuart has only to say, by way of reply, that the "persons" of the trinity mean "some distinction, not three beings or separate consciousnesses. What is that distinction? I do not know. It is a fact, . . . but we do not pretend to understand what it is." "Unitarianism," he adds, "will come to pure rationalism—the sooner the better. Then the parties will understand each other."

Not the argument of the Baltimore discourse, however, so much as its positive and aggressive tone, the total absence of apology in it, accounts for the effect it appears to have had as argument. To this we must add, besides, the warm prophet-glow which made it not a bald essay of doctrinal theology, but a living discourse of positive religion. It became, accordingly, the keynote of what is known to this day as "Channing Unitarianism." This

et religion as a spirit and a life. In respect of doctrine is unsatisfying and vague. Rejecting creeds, it yet no firm hold on scientific thought. Modern psychology and modern criticism are a world unknown to the field it shows in to best advantage is the field of higher and finer ethics of human life, ethics both personal and social. It has done much to exalt and vitalize common moralities, which it has always been charged with laying too much stress upon; and it has, in particular, done a great deal of the best work of our day in education and the larger humanities. In the later years of his life, Channing was most widely known as a Christian Unitarian. It was he who perhaps contributed most, with his friend Joseph Tuckerman, to the earliest reorganizing of the charities of Boston in the Free Church of Churches, established in 1835. Such topics as education, temperance, humane legislation, reform of criminals, international peace, had in him an able, fluent, effective advocate. With a certain hardihood that might seem alien from his shrinking and valiant temper, he stood openly upon the public platform beside the abolitionist leaders, whose counsel and methods he did not accept, when they were most

istic exhibition of his serene, idealizing, hopeful style of eloquence than in the Lenox address on emancipation in the British West Indies, delivered a few weeks before his death.¹

"The healthiest period in the moral life of Boston and its vicinity," wrote Dr. Gannett, "was during the quarter of a century between the years 1810 and 1835." These were the days when Channing's purely religious influence was most powerful; before the days when the Unitarian body was sharply divided on points of critical theology, and when the questions touching slavery went so deep into our political life. It was not a period of special depth or earnestness in religious thought. The essays that followed up old lines of discussion were mostly re-statements of the familiar argument, void of the genuine though acrid heat of controversy. The time of scientific criticism was not yet, and doctrine as development had not come to be matter of historic curiosity. When the question of Christ's preëxistence was stirred, in 1822, "Leave it alone," said Henry Ware, Jr.—then a young minister of Boston, singularly beloved, of sweet and humble temper, with occasional quick sharpness of speech and well versed in debate—"leave it alone; it is a thing of small consequence!" The "Christian Examiner" was founded in 1824 to take the place of the "Christian Disciple," whose tone was thought to be too smooth and vague, and was conducted by a series of able editors; but in its first year it disclaimed sympathy with Universalism, which, as a kindred and more positive creed, might possibly have touched the mild liberalism of that day with a more virile temper. The advance in theology was timid and faltering. A tone of weariness and self-distrust has been found, or suspected,

¹ He died of autumn fever, at Bennington, Vt., October 2, 1842, at the age of sixty-two.

in the Unitarian literature of the years ensuing, as if from distaste or fatigue of the long-drawn battle. The most significant word spoken in this interval was but a half-way word of apology, appearing in the "Examiner" in 1829, to the effect that the Bible is, after all, "not a revelation, but the record of a revelation." The formula passed current for a time, but soon caught the unfriendly eye. "There, it is out at last!" was the exulting cry of the "Spirit of the Pilgrims," eager to renew the battle. The "pure rationalism" predicted by Moses Stuart seemed to be already in the field. Unitarianism, said Channing ten years later, speaking of this time, was but "a protest of the understanding against absurd dogmas. We were early paralyzed by the mixture of philosophy, and fell too much into the hands of scholars and political reformers." The last word of the Unitarian controversy, as a still living issue on the old lines, is held to have been spoken when, in 1833, Rev. George B. Cheever delivered at Salem a discourse described as "vituperative," to which no formal reply seems to have been offered. With this, and a "Post-script" addressed to the "Examiner," we have "the last publication of any note before the controversy virtually ceased."¹

"The result is," said Dr. Gannett, speaking in 1835, "we are a community by ourselves." The process by which the two "wings" of the Congregational body in Massachusetts had gradually drawn apart, began very far back. In 1812 Rev. John Codman, of Dorchester, announced at his settlement that in the customary pulpit exchanges of courtesy with neighboring ministers he should be free (which meant that he would be bound)

¹ The nature of the questions at issue, and especially their bearing on the religious topics of the day, should be studied in "A Half Century of the Unitarian Controversy," by George E. Ellis, D.D. (Boston, 1857).

to draw the line against those not orthodox. 'This announcement was reckoned harsh and strange, and it led to a local controversy of some sharpness, in which Mr. Codman gained his point. There remained, however, and has continued to this day, a neutral belt, within which the ancient courtesies are still exchanged.

But the line of distinction was growing more broad and distinct with years. In 1823 the orthodox position, held till then by only one of the Boston Congregational churches, was greatly strengthened by the coming of Dr. Lyman Beecher to the charge of a congregation just gathered in Park Street—"Brimstone Corner," as it was fondly called during the years of orthodox revival which followed. In 1828 the "Spirit of the Pilgrims" was established, to aid in winning back the ground that had been lost; and this fresh voice vigorously sustained the policy of excluding the new light from evangelical pulpits. In the same year the "Christian Examiner" showed also an unwonted access of polemical ardor: three articles on "infant damnation," the sorest spot of the old Calvinism, and a paper by Orville Dewey on "Orthodoxy and Liberalism," testify to the fresh zest of controversy. Charges of bigotry were hotly pressed on one side, to be repelled disdainfully by the other; but "Are they not true?" asks Channing, in 1831. The zeal, however, was short-lived, and seems to have lapsed, in a year or two, into the somewhat languid indifference before noted; and, with this, Unitarian journals admit a certain lack and sterility of the religious life in too many of their congregations, especially the country churches, in contrast with the new awakening of Evangelicalism in New England.

In 1831 we hear the first note of "German Rationalism" in a paper by Francis Cunningham (the earliest translator of Gieseler into English), showing that Unitarianism

rian thought already begins to turn towards new issues. It is, further, an interesting point to remark that the fading out of the older controversy in 1833 exactly coincides with the withdrawal of all legal support from the churches of Massachusetts, which must rely thenceforth wholly on voluntary gifts. Here the advantage was to those of the more positive and aggressive faith. The disestablishment, it is probable, was more dreaded by the liberal party; and the advocacy of it by some of the more orthodox may be taken as a damaging retort to the Dedham decision, which had turned over the old church powers and properties to secular hands.

But the Unitarians were well content with the immense advantage they still held in that undisputed social and political ascendancy so well described by Dr. Beecher. In the exercise of this advantage it may be claimed that they were not wholly unworthy custodians of it. The motive of their gospel, as announced and upheld by Channing, was fundamentally ethical: it appealed to conscience, and aimed directly to affect the conduct of life. Such a gospel is not like a creed, which demands rigid interpreting of its terms. It is rather a law of life, capable of infinitely modified and varying application. What it was in the character of the lay public to which it made appeal, and in the scrupulous administration of great public trusts, has been often told, and makes the most characteristic as it is the most honorable chapter in the story of Unitarianism in America. A long line of jurists, statesmen, men of science or of business, including such names as Adams, Quincy, Bigelow, Jackson, Shaw, Lowell, Perkins, Appleton; of men of letters, including, with hardly an exception, every one of those who, from Prescott to Holmes, have given Boston its place in our intellectual history—testify not so much the direct influence and power of

Unitarianism itself, as the nature of the soil it sprang from, and of the mental atmosphere in which it thrived. But the diversities of type and operation it put directly forth will be seen most clearly in a group—which I sketch from personal memories—of honored names among its preachers, friends and companions of Channing in his work, who exhibit in varying phases the light of that faith which is properly characteristic of the period he represents.

A few such names, of those no longer living, are the following: Orville Dewey (1794–1882), a man of unique power in the pulpit, which was his throne, in whom thought was more intimately blended with emotion than in any other great preacher we have listened to or can easily bring to mind, who seemed to make the sacred desk a confessional to whisper the most secret things of the religious life, whose large and brooding intellect set itself to interpret the soul's deepest experience in terms of freshest knowledge and youngest thought, whose mind was generously open till long past eighty to the latest methods or discoveries in the pursuit of truth; Nathaniel Langdon Frothingham (1793–1870), the very model—like his friend and classmate Everett—of a Christian gentleman and scholar, cultivated in mind, refined in taste, placid of temper, courteous and sweet in manner, of intellect widely open to the welcome of freshest truth, but jealously alive to the traditions and sanctities of religious observance; James Walker (1794–1874), president of the university, most grave and candid of divines, honored alike in professional and in academic life, of singular ethical weight and power in the pulpit, a man whose shrewd wisdom, generous tolerance, wide philosophic culture, and dignity of character were not more marked than the cordial and kindly interest he always had in younger men; John Pierpont (1785–1866), tender religious poet and high-tempered

Christian warrior, proud, combative, fond of subtle paradox, hot with the glow of ethical passion, eager to strike out every way in the battle of reform, always pressing home some sharp point of his aggressive moral creed; Samuel Joseph May (1797-1871), that brave saint of all the humanities, in whom sweetness and courage were more perfectly blended than in any other we have known, whose great heart by a generous instinct went out every way to the poor, the forsaken, and the oppressed, whose temper was so radiant with kindly humor that they who loved him may say that only to have looked upon him was a sort of sunshine in one nook at least of the most unfriended life; Ezra Stiles Gannett (1801-71), Channing's colleague and successor in the Federal Street pulpit, most fervid and devoted of men, whose conscience, morbidly acute, was burdened with every grief and sin of the city where he did his noble work, whose burning speech almost inspired the cool temper of Boston Unitarianism with his own missionary zeal, of whom it may well be said that ten such men would have carried the blaze of his generous gospel like a prairie fire from shore to shore of our continent; George Putnam (1807-77), whose clear argumentative statement commanded the respect of the ablest jurists, whose large sense matched the worldly wisdom of statesmen and financiers, the eloquent orator of homely morality and the religion of every-day life, which his touch transfigured to poetry and splendor; Ephraim Peabody (1807-56), his classmate and nearest friend, the well-beloved minister of King's Chapel, whose voice was melody and his face a benediction, who so patiently endured much poverty and sorrow in his earlier ministry that its later prosperity and joy were always touched with grave humility of spirit, in whom serenity, sweetness, and a cautious wisdom were gathered in a combination as rare

as it was attractive; William Greenleaf Eliot (1811-87), who in his bright youth left the most flattering prospects of a metropolitan career that he might devote his life, as he did with singular intelligence, consecration, and energy, to what was then remote frontier service in St. Louis, gaining for his reward the largest moral and personal power accorded to any man in that great community; Andrew Preston Peabody (1811-93), everybody's helper and friend, kindly, scholarly, grave, in whom the most gracious type of the elder scriptural Unitarianism survived through an entire generation, welcomed and trusted alike in every Christian communion regardless of all bounds of sect, who, when lines of division appeared in his own religious body, sided somewhat sharply with the elder party, yet with a kindliness of heart that widened and mellowed as his years increased, and who, with rare freshness of physical and mental vigor, obeyed every summons of social or public duty to the very end. These memories may serve to hint the quality of "Boston Unitarianism" in the day of its ascendancy and power.¹

In the year 1832, just while the glow of the earlier controversy was fading out, the first open break was made with the accepted customs of the Congregational order. Ralph Waldo Emerson, minister of the Second Church in Boston (where he had succeeded Henry Ware, Jr., three years before), resigned his charge on the refusal of his church-members to discontinue or radically change the order of communion service. The discourse in which he took leave of his congregation, in giving reasons for the step, reviews briefly the practice of the primitive church, examines in detail the New Testament grounds for regard-

¹ The character of the earlier Unitarianism will be best traced in the volumes of "American Unitarian Biography," edited by Rev. William Ware (Boston, 2 vols.), and in Dr. Sprague's "Annals of the American Pulpit," vol. viii.

ing the Lord's Supper as a positive ordinance, and states briefly the practical objections to the customary form. It is, in short, quite the most formal and argumentative essay that remains to us of Emerson's composition.¹ To these reasons he might have added that Congregationalism has never regarded the Lord's Supper as a sacrament vitally essential; and that it was almost wholly suspended during the first nine years of the Plymouth colony, because it might not be administered by an elder, but only by an ordained pastor. The shock was nevertheless sharply felt—not least, it is probable, by the Unitarians, who were in general devout observers of that ordinance, and might feel a jar, as of suddenly opening the gates to a wide and unfamiliar field of the religious life outside. Mr. Emerson thus withdrew, in his thirtieth year, to the rural life which his genius has made illustrious, and for some years lived content in that calm retreat.

In 1836 that genius first declared itself to the world in the quaint, winning, lovely, and sometimes baffling pages of "Nature," the earliest poetic or prophetic breath of that fresh mental life then called "transcendental." It was received as the stirring of an air balmy and fragrant, it might be, but filled with strange odors, and of dubious effect on the spiritual climate. Some of us still remember a certain grave solicitude with which its phrases were first listened to by Unitarians of the elder school, who felt rather than saw whither that new influence might tend. The solicitude deepened when—heralded by the wholly unconventional style and charm of his address on "The American Scholar" given in 1837—Mr. Emerson delivered in July, 1838, the most celebrated and influential of all his public discourses, that spoken to the graduating class of the Harvard Divinity School. This was the frankest

¹ It is given in full in an appendix to O. B. Frothingham's "Transcendentalism in New England."

challenge ever as yet thrown down to the traditional views of the Divine Nature, Jesus, Christianity, or the offices of the church; and it proved the melodious, effective prelude to a conflict of opinion that has far more deeply than any other stirred the current of our religious thought.

The feeling with which the Divinity School Address was received has been described by a listener to it as "a vague and exhilarating delight: it had shocked some, while it had charmed others, as the first clear word of 'another gospel, which yet was not another.'" Its covert doctrine was currently supposed to be Pantheism; and this was described by one of the critics of the day as "Atheism disguising itself under a preposterous name," which only made the danger of it the greater. As a challenge to the dreaded tendency, Prof. Henry Ware, Jr., preached in the college chapel a sermon on "the personality of the Deity," a copy of which he sent with a friendly note to Mr. Emerson, eliciting this very characteristic reply: "I could not possibly give you one of the arguments you cruelly hint at, on which any doctrine of mine stands; for I do not know what arguments mean in reference to any expression of thought." "Not," adds his biographer, "that he was incapable of reasoning, but always disinclined to argue;" and "upon this occasion argument would have been out of place."

But controversy was in the air, and was formally opened the next year (1839) by Andrews Norton, late professor in the School, in a discourse on "the latest form of infidelity." This discourse was not an attack on any position distinctly taken by Mr. Emerson, or on the critical results of German scholarship, which Mr. Norton had himself, in fact, largely adopted.¹ It dealt rather with certain tendencies in German thought charged as vague, delusive,

¹ As shown, later, in his "Note" on the Old Testament, and in his rejection of the first two chapters of Matthew's Gospel (see p. 210, below).

on. The positive tone of assertion and the combat-
nper of the discourse at once brought forward new
to the debate. Of the replies, much the ablest
ost important was that of Rev. George Ripley, then
er of a congregation newly gathered in Purchase
since dissolved. Mr. Ripley addressed to Profes-
orton a series of "Letters," which were in fact
ite essays, making a moderately thick volume. In
with admirable spirit and ability, he gave citations
ious as to make his pamphlets a pretty full intro-
n and guide to the study of the famous writers
names had been so thrust upon the public. These
lets, with one in which Mr. Norton sustained and
ced his charges, amply cover the ground of the de-
nough several writers of lesser note volunteered to
port of one or the other party.

real point at issue in that debate has been often
erstood, as if it had been merely the question of
ng the miraculous or supernatural features of the
history. On the contrary, Mr. Ripley says, in one
etters, "For my own part, I cannot avoid the con-
that the miracles related in the Gospels were actu-
ought by Jesus;" and Theodore Parker (then near
of thirty) assuming the name "Levi Blodgett"

dispute was not as to their opinions, which at that time were in the main those generally held; but as to a new and unfamiliar order of thought, which was seen to be powerfully affecting the principles and foundations of men's religious belief. In this dispute Mr. Norton, whose method was in itself the more rationalizing and scientific, held to the hard-and-fast supernaturalism of the older Unitarian school; while his opponents, claiming more for the distinctively spiritual side of man's intelligence, opened the way to the pure naturalism, with all its critical results, which he foresaw. They earnestly maintained the reality of the religious life, wholly independent of doctrinal form; while he honestly held that very clearly defined opinion is essential to any hold upon religious truth. To such a mind as his the language of Mr. Ripley, or that of the German theologians whom he copied, must seem vague, delusive, and sophistical.

Meanwhile the work of criticism had been going on, in lines quite independent of this debate. In 1831, as we have seen, the first hint had been given of that form of exposition known as "German rationalism." In 1834 Rev. (afterwards Professor) George R. Noyes, then the studious pastor of a country parish, published an essay on the Messianic prophets, as fit answer to which was suggested a prosecution under the old Massachusetts law of blasphemy; and Attorney-General Austin was understood to stand ready to conduct the case if the terms of the statute had seemed to warrant. Prof. John G. Palfrey's "Lectures on Jewish History and Antiquities," published in 1840, expounded the Book of Genesis as a later compilation from at least two independent sources, while defending the received opinion as to the other "Mosaic" writings. A "Note" on the Old Testament by Andrews Norton, appearing in 1844, rejected the opinion that

Moses was in any sense the author of the Pentateuch, or that the prophets were divinely inspired to foretell the mission of Christ; it criticised with the utmost freedom the history, morals, and doctrine found in the Hebrew scriptures; and maintained the exceptional inspiration of Moses and Elijah purely on the ground of allusions made to them in the Gospels, and as a position to be held in the argument for the Christian evidences. About the same time De Wette's "Introduction to the Old Testament," translated and copiously annotated by Theodore Parker, brought suddenly into view the whole wide range of German erudition in that province.

So far, the discussion, though open to public hearing, was directly addressed to scholars, critics, and students of theology. But a word of note had been spoken, and was widely echoing, from the South Boston pulpit, where, on the 19th of May, 1841, Theodore Parker addressed the congregation gathered at the settlement of Rev. Charles C. Shackford, on "the transient and permanent in Christianity." The wide impression made by this discourse was due in part to its qualities of thought and style; but still more to its bringing the most radical questions of critical theology directly before the popular mind, and appealing on them to the popular judgment,—we must add, the confident and warmly religious tone of that appeal. Hitherto, miracles would seem to have been tacitly assented to on both sides, as marking the line of division between Christian belief and whatever lay outside. Now, the wonderful works ascribed to Jesus were suddenly, nay, offensively, brought to the level of those performed by such errant theosophists as Apollonius of Tyana, while his divine generation was compared to that of Hercules, son of Jove. And all this, in seeming unconsciousness of the shock which such comparison must give.

These things it is necessary to mention, because they counted far more than argument in the angry reaction that followed. That sharply reactionary temper prevailed, in a large majority of the Unitarian body, almost to the time of Theodore Parker's death; and it has only been soothed, since, by a mood of religious thought to which the question of miracles itself is no longer essential but incidental. "Now we have a Unitarian orthodoxy!" was Channing's comment, in anticipation of the debate that followed. Of its later effect the following testimony, published in 1889, has been accepted without denial or dispute: that, respecting the miracles of the New Testament, "thousands among us receive them with the same faith, comfort, and reverence as of old; but not one of us thinks of defining the line of Christian fellowship by them, not one of us would stake a single point of his own religious faith upon them, not one of us appeals to them as argument for the spiritual truth,—at most, as what that 'truth as it is in Jesus' may help us to accept."¹

This great change of general opinion could not possibly be anticipated then. The controversy, as it followed, was in great part a battle in the dark, for lack of mutual understanding of the terms employed. To set his position more plainly before the public, Mr. Parker expounded it, the succeeding winter, in a series of five lectures, which appeared in the spring of 1842, enlarged into a thick volume, as a "Discourse of Matters Pertaining to Religion." This book is probably the best, certainly it has proved far the most effective, exposition of his style of religious thought. With great ardor of conviction, generous confidence in the power of naked truth, lavish illustration from literary sources, and noble wealth of rhetoric, it disarmed by no reticence—nay, rather, exasperated by needless affronts—

¹ "Unitarian Review" for January, 1889, p. 16.

the angry prejudice already raised against its author, whom opposition now forced into a far wider field of influence than any denominational boundaries could permit.

The death of Channing, just at this turning-point of our history, removed one bond of peace. He was in doubt whether to call Parker a Christian, but at least esteemed and loved him as a friend. Sharp lines of separation began now to be drawn. These showed first in the withholding of pulpit exchanges, which then more than now were the accepted test of fellowship—an inconvenient one, since they suggested, if they did not imply, the *right* to be heard before an audience to which one might be neither asked nor welcome. Besides, as was aptly said at the time, the objection felt to these exchanges was not all on the conservative side. The earliest, and surely a quite gratuitous, bitterness occasioned by the controversy thus grew out of a mere custom or convention, which would be submitted to in no other walk of life, and at this day is hardly even understood. To avoid that token of fraternity or to withhold it was then counted a personal affront.

Another step of separation was suggested, but was never carried out. It was, that Mr. Parker should be compelled, either by direct exclusion or by moral pressure, to retire from membership in the Boston Association. The subject was formally debated in his presence at a meeting held in January, 1843. When he was charged with holding a position outside of Christianity, he replied that he, on the contrary, accepted Christianity as "absolute religion"; and demanded, if any did not so regard it, whether they held it to be more or less than absolute religion, and if more, then what must be added to absolute religion to make it Christianity!¹ The obvious answer

¹ He appears never to have defined quite clearly the meaning of the phrase "absolute religion." Thus he once wrote, "If to-morrow I am to perish

would be, that Christianity is absolute religion as testified by certain witnesses, embodied in certain customs and institutions, and vouched by a special Divine authority, through which evidences it becomes, in fact, valid and effectual for us. Discussion on this line seems not to have been taken up. Through much variance and some sharpness of opinion appearing in his own account of the debate, yet the common feeling, as he describes it, was generous and even tender. "The sharp arrows," says Mr. Frothingham, in narrating this incident, "fell harmless to the ground; the flushed faces became placid, the angry looks died away." Should the Association exercise its clear right of dismissal, wrote Mr. Parker, afterwards, "I will never complain; but, so long as the world standeth, I will not withdraw voluntarily while I consider rights of conscience at issue. To withdraw voluntarily would be to abandon what I think a post of duty." He never did withdraw, and never was dismissed.

One other test of fellowship remained. At the end of 1844, being just returned from a year's stay in Europe, Mr. Parker came in order of course to preach the "Thursday Lecture" at the First Church in Boston. This was an institution dating from early colony days, and in times of public stir was an occasion of much local importance. Tradition tells of a diligent hearer who walked weekly from Newburyport, thirty-five miles, to listen and then to ponder upon the discourse during his homeward tramp. It was at first a stated service of the minister of the First Church, but had come by custom to be taken in turn

utterly, then I shall take only counsel for to-day, and ask for qualities which last no longer. I shall care nothing for future generations of mankind; I shall know no higher law; morality will vanish, and expediency will take its place; courage for truth's sake, for love's sake, will be a thing no longer heard of." A Stoic would have said, "If to-morrow I am to perish utterly, at least I will keep my faith in virtue to-day." This latter, surely, is the nearer to "absolute religion."

by the members of the Boston Association, who generally (we may suppose) held it more a duty than a privilege. To Theodore Parker it was both. Before a crowded and unwonted audience he spoke, with the same freedom as before, on "the relation of Jesus to his age and the ages." The former offense was renewed, and the pastor of the First Church was officially notified that on any future occasion the doors of the church would be, at need, forcibly closed to Mr. Parker. This compelled a revival of the question of his membership in the Boston Association, which made the topic of discussion at three protracted sessions—this time, in his absence. Two of its members (as I recall its debates¹) were prepared to vote for his exclusion, pure and simple. The general feeling expressed was, however, kind and just. Old memories of protest against "the exclusive system" made a return to it impossible. But it was urged that some step was necessary, to avoid a possible public scandal in contending for right of entrance to the church. The simplest course was taken by requesting the minister of the First Church (Dr. Frothingham) to resume into his own charge the conduct of the lecture. The lecture continued for some months to be kept up under the new conditions, and was then dropped by common consent.

The one point gained was that, contrary to a very general expectation, the Unitarian body neither dissolved nor parted into two fragments on the threatened line of division. Controversy, misunderstanding, mutual distrust, could not be avoided. For more than half a generation there was a grave loss to the body in the angry withdrawal or neutral adhesion of many of its younger and bolder members,—a grave loss to its visible unity and its moral

¹ There are, besides myself, two survivors of the Association as it existed then, Drs. Cyrus A. Bartol and George E. Ellis. Dec. 20, 1894

Wm. F. D. Huntington

strength. The erasure from its calendar of several of its brightest names may show how great a power of growth and active energy it forfeited. But the question at stake was more fundamental and difficult, the religious tradition and habit involved were more deeply rooted, than many of its younger adherents could possibly understand. Besides, the line of division just then drawn across the path of advance was sure to be come up with and overpassed by increasing numbers, as the course of opinion should tend in the direction long foreseen. There remained the greatly outweighing advantage, to the religious body as such, of keeping unbroken its historic continuity, with whatever gain might come to it of future opportunity. The angry sense of desertion on one part, or of injustice on the other, is long forgotten. The memory of divided feeling that once seemed past restoring is held out visibly, to those of a younger day, in the portraits of Channing and Parker that serenely face each other in our gallery of worthies, and in the memorial volumes of their writings, issued by the Unitarian Associations of both America and Britain.¹

In the long division of opinion that ensued, which so greatly crippled the forces of the Unitarian body, three customs especially aided to prevent its falling apart, and to save it for whatever service it might afterwards be capable to effect. The first, and perhaps the most effective, was what is still known as the "Berry Street Conference": an annual gathering of liberal ministers, who were first invited to meet at Dr. Channing's vestry, just off Federal Street. This was and is a strictly professional gathering,

¹ I have given in "Our Liberal Movement" a more extended study (from personal knowledge) of Theodore Parker's character and work than could be admitted here, preceded by a chapter on the "fifteen years of controversy" which connect his work with Channing's. He died in Florence, Italy, May 10, 1860, a little before completing his fiftieth year.

without witness and without reporter; having, therefore, the full freedom of private conversation on all matters of professional interest. It was, too, a meeting of *gentlemen*, in which the amenities of friendly talk were rarely broken. The rules of debate were of the simplest; the topic of it was introduced by a more or less formal address, which might touch upon any aspect of the question of the hour; in the conduct of it the most advanced radical was on exactly equal terms with the gravest conservative; the fervor of a rapt idealist, like William Henry Channing, might call out the equal fervor of an ardent denominational leader, like Dr. Gannett; one who had sturdily urged that the Unitarian body must and ought to be divided might find himself on the same bench with those very ones he would exclude, or next neighbor to one who anxiously dreaded lest they might be. In such an alembic as that, of friendly and free however warm discussion, not many years were needed to habituate those unlikest in opinion to accept the fact of a deeper ground of union.

A like process went on in the public gatherings of "Anniversary Week," at the end of May, where all matters of common interest appealed to the common judgment, and where the formal discussions of business were followed by the cheerful informality of the Thursday's Festival, which just about this time (1843) became a yearly custom. As the circle of fellowship widened out with the denominational growth, it took in an increasing majority of those whose opinions were not sharply defined on either side, thus diluting the asperities of local feeling; and a process of adjustment went on, hardly noticeable from year to year, but in the course of half a generation making all aware that the mental atmosphere was changed.

Besides, other topics of hotter and keener interest than theological debate brought in other lines of sympathy or dissent. Conservative and radical might change places, when the discussion shifted to the temperance platform or the antislavery crusade. And in course of time, as all the moral forces of the community came to be enlisted to sustain the nation itself in its life-and-death struggle with Secession, theological differences and alienations disappeared in the fiercer heat of battle.

These influences, all tending to reconciliation and better common understanding, were helped, again, by the custom which began at Providence, in 1841, of the "Autumnal Convention," held alternate with the annual gathering in Boston, in places so wide apart as Baltimore, Buffalo, Montreal, and Bangor. The exaggeration and heat of local controversy were thus tempered in the widening sense of a common interest and a common life. Difference of place was favorable to diversity and freedom of expression. It was, above all other times, the period of moral and religious oratory. A new spirit went into the discussions, taking occasionally a tone of the finest and most moving eloquence which the cause of a free theology has ever, perhaps, called forth. Occasions such as these did as much as any single thing to invigorate the somewhat languid sense of one organic life, and prepare the way for that broader view of religion which must be had if the liberal body was to survive at all under the changed conditions. Fifteen years of controversy, which had once seemed likely to rend it in pieces, led in fact to a revival of denominational unity and vigor, such as would never have been thought possible by its founders.

With this simplest of denominational equipment, and under general guidance of the American Unitarian ~~Association~~

ciation ("A. U. A."), founded on the 25th of May, 1825,¹ the growth in numbers, though slow, was very constant. Washington had been added to the list of churches in 1820, Cincinnati and Louisville in 1830, Buffalo in 1831, New Orleans in 1833, St. Louis in 1834, Chicago in 1836. At the date we have now reached (1860), 218 of the churches still on the rolls were already in existence. Of these, something more than half were originally local parishes, founded under the polity of the Puritan colonists, and dating before the War of the Revolution. Of the remainder, ninety were established between the years 1820 and 1860—that is, after the line of separation from the orthodox Congregationalists had been drawn; and of these, again, just one half date from the later period, after 1840, while interior difference and controversy were most active. Especially we note that the widest spread of Unitarianism, geographically, took place during these twenty years of divided counsel, when, outside of New England, new societies were first established in Michigan, Iowa, Wisconsin, Kansas, Indiana, California, and Canada. This spread was due chiefly, no doubt, to the agencies of the A. U. A., which had shown its hand liberally from the start, sending a gift of six hundred dollars in 1827 to friends in British India. Its resources in money were extremely small, rarely amounting to as much as \$10,000 in a single year. But from the beginning it gave direc-

¹ By a chance coincidence, on the same year and day with the British and Foreign Unitarian Association, in London. The following have been the presidents of the A. U. A.:

1825-36, Aaron Bancroft, D.D.,
 1837-44, Ichabod Nichols, D.D.,
 1844-45, Joseph Story, LL.D.,
 1845-47, Orville Dewey, D.D.,
 1847-51, E. S. Gannett, D.D.,
 1851-58, S. K. Lothrop, D.D.,
 1858-59, E. B. Hall, D.D.,
 1859-62, F. H. Hedge, D.D.,

1862-65, R. P. Stebbins, D.D.,
 1865-67, Hon. J. G. Palfrey,
 1867-70, Hon. T. D. Eliot,
 1870-72, Hon. Henry Chapin,
 1872-76, Hon. John Wells,
 1876-85, H. P. Kidder, Esq.,
 1885- , Hon. Geo. S. Hale.

tion, and such aid as it could, to the work of "church extension," on the modest scale befitting a religious body that still refused to regard itself as a sect, and hence lacked the zeal, energy, and ambition of a sect.

How many, in fact, of those still affiliated with it, whose names were even recorded in its lists, would accept the title "Unitarian," it is impossible to say. Its most honored religious leader, Channing, and its most eminent critical scholar, Norton, were among a large proportion of its best early representatives—at least ten to one, thinks Dr. Ellis—who protested strongly against accepting any sectarian name, especially one so narrowed and warped by controversy. To them the movement they embarked in was towards a larger intellectual and religious life, free of the restraints imposed by a doctrinal system they disallowed; and it was justified to their mind by scrupulous study and exposition of the Christian Scriptures—as far as possible from the form of "free religion" it seemed tending to. Anything like denominational machinery, for the propagating of particular opinions, such men thoroughly disliked; all the more when freedom of interpretation, through younger minds inspired by a strange philosophy, seemed to compromise them also, by claiming alliance with them under a title they disowned. So that anything like large increase of corporate strength to the movement was blocked by the very men who had been its early inspirers and guides.

It happened, accordingly, that among its later best known leaders some of the ablest, the boldest, and the most influential were of those who came into its ranks as new converts, in mature life, with experience gained and powers ripened by religious methods not its own, without either the sympathies or the restraints they would have felt if bred in its tradition. Of itself, a religious move-

ment whose motive force is mainly critical is in danger of becoming frigid and sterile when the glow of controversy has faded out of it. The Unitarian movement has by no means escaped this charge, either in others' esteem or in its own. As one result, its power of self-propagation has often lain more with those who have been trained in other communions, and have entered this with the joy of a new intellectual freedom, than with children of its own blood, critics rather than champions of its cause. The freeborn are sometimes less jealous of their liberty than those who have obtained it "with a great sum." Dr. Dewey's name stands eminent at the head of such loyal converts, without whose fresh zeal the movement itself might perhaps have slackened, leaving the banner of its faith to be borne by other hands under another name.

Two monuments of the period now reviewed may be noted here. The Divinity School in Meadville, Pa., was founded by the Huidekoper family in 1844, and was conducted for twelve years under the most devoted and energetic administration of Dr. Rufus P. Stebbins. Its resources have since been greatly strengthened and enlarged. Antioch College, at Yellow Springs, O., originally a school sustained by the "Christian Connection," came about 1850 under Unitarian control; and for eight years the Hon. Horace Mann, after relinquishing the seat in Congress that fell to him upon the death of John Quincy Adams, gave to it, at times without pay, and literally at the cost of his life, the crowning work of his great career in the cause of education. Up to the time of these two foundations Unitarianism was still an exotic, or a work of frontier pioneering, in the West. And these must count chief among the influences that gave it, at this time, some faint claim to regard itself as having already the promise and the potency of a larger life.

CHAPTER X.

THE NEW UNITARIANISM.

DURING the years of the Civil War questions of doctrine or sect were overshadowed by the vaster national interests at stake. The slow average growth of the Unitarian body went on about as before. But it is honorably true of all religious bodies in our country that their best activities were drawn away to other channels. Their life became an element in the nation's life, and was given freely to serve it or to save it. Of the Unitarians it may only be said that they contributed their share with others, and that in some ways they were enabled to render special service of their own.

Of the record in the "Harvard Memorial Biographies" a large proportion, at least forty out of ninety-five, give names and memories that belong distinctly to the line of tradition we have been endeavoring to trace. These were high examples of a consecrated heroism on the field of battle, or in camp and hospital. In civic life the service was equally great. The imperial State of California, with perhaps all our Pacific Coast, was saved to the Union, said General Winfield Scott, "by a young man of the name of King." The aged general was perplexed to understand the story he so repeated. What it meant was this: Early in 1860, Thomas Starr King—then, at the age of thirty-five, of great and growing reputation as a preacher, a popular lecturer of wide and brilliant fame, of gracious and wonderful charm as a companion, of beaming wit and

ice of the pentagon.

l somewhat fastidious judgment of men and things, certain vein of self-distrust, had held him back from himself, heart and soul, to the great moral conflict day. Now that this conflict became one with that ch the life of the nation itself was staked, a new y of eloquent passion was found in him. He be- he favorite and most effective of popular debaters. s the ready champion at every large public gather- His voice was in demand at political centers widely ed. Within four years he had literally given his ay in that magnificent service; and he died on the March, 1864, a little past the age of thirty-nine. ork like this was done in Missouri by Dr. William ot, of St. Louis. He had begun in 1834 the task, seemed almost hopeless then, of building up a r church in that great city. Nearly thirty years of followed up with extraordinary sagacity, persist- and courage, and with rare singleness of devotion the higher interests of that community, had given position of influence which led a citizen there to As much as any other man? Dr. Eliot has done ves as much as any other ten men to keep Missouri o the Union as a free State!" Before his death, in

ney Bellows, of New York, in creating and directing the National Sanitary Commission. This, under the organizing skill of its secretary, Frederick Law Olmsted, became a powerful though unofficial arm of the national government. It has its own voluminous history as part of the annals of that time. But its real work grew out of the personal qualities that Dr. Bellows brought to it: his cheery, buoyant, indefatigable temper; his wide knowledge of the world, which put him on equal terms with any whom he might meet, of whatever civil or military rank, and might have made him as eminent a diplomatist or statesman as he was an orator of power; his eager, generous, and powerful sympathies, going out from a nature glowing with the warmest human affection, and always expanding into some new field of service; a temper by nature dominating and masterful, with an equal fidelity to the cause he served, that made him at need one of its humblest and most hard-worked ministers. Throughout the war there was not a moment when his hand and voice were not ready at every call; and after the war he was the indispensable leader of his own religious communion, opening out to it almost or quite all the new paths of action in which it has labored since. Full of high courage as he was, self-reliant in act and eloquent of speech, no man was more cordial and unreserved in common friendship, or of a more genuine humility of spirit and generosity in judgment, while serving in the ranks with others.

These three names may stand to represent the signal and eminent service done at this time by beloved leaders of the Unitarian body. Three other names may illustrate what was done by some of its ministers in other ways, whether in the army ranks, or as chaplains in field or camp. Augustus H. Conant, of Geneva, Ill., who as a sturdy emigrant had gone to the prairie from Vermont, and

had been turned towards the liberal ministry about 1840 by the chance finding of a Unitarian tract, died while serving heroically as chaplain on the terrible field near Murfreesboro, in the first days of 1863. Arthur B. Fuller, of Watertown, Mass., brother of Margaret Fuller and literary editor of her writings, volunteered to join in a desperate charge at Fredericksburg, and was shot down in the street, December 14, 1862. Frederick N. Knapp, a man singularly gifted alike with sweetness of nature and practical intelligence, and a scholar of fine mathematical ability, ministered personally to more than twenty thousand sick, wounded, or footsore soldiers while in charge of the Soldiers' Home, near Washington, and had the unique distinction of being the one man, who had borne neither sword nor musket, admitted to the military organization of surviving veterans of the war. At his burial, in January, 1889, the shops in Plymouth were closed, and business was suspended, as for a day of public mourning.

One other service of that time, more modest, claims a word of mention. When, early in 1862, the "Sea Islands" off the coast of South Carolina were captured by the national fleet, a colony of teachers, under the government authority, went to take in hand the instruction of the negroes left behind on the plantations. The work was continued there till the end of the war; and, when Charleston was occupied in the spring of 1865, the schools for both blacks and whites were at once organized (under appointment of James Redpath) by Prof. William Francis Allen, one of the same corps of instructors, who was afterwards long known in his connection with the University of Wisconsin, representing there and elsewhere the oldest and best traditions of the Unitarian faith, till his death, in December, 1889.

At a special meeting of the A. U. A. held December

7, 1864, it was resolved to call "a convention, to consist of a pastor and two delegates from each church or parish in the Unitarian denomination, to meet in the city of New York, to consider the interests of our cause, and to institute measures for its good." This convention—the first formally representative meeting of that body in this country—was held on the 5th and 6th of the following April, and was organized as a "National Conference of Unitarian and other Christian Churches." Its sessions were held regularly in September or October of the alternate years from 1866 to 1886, the last seven being at Saratoga. To avoid disturbance from the biennial political campaign, the date was changed, the Conference meeting in 1889, 1891, and 1894, while in 1893 it yielded to the claim of an "International Congress of Unitarians" held in Chicago, in connection with the "World's Parliament of Religions," as a feature in the great Columbian Exposition of that year.

The National Conference is understood to have been both suggested and organized by the mind of Dr. Bellows, who was at this time the one unquestioned leader of the body he belonged to. His experience during the war, confirmed by a few months' stay in California in 1864, had deepened his conviction that the popular religion of the country was rapidly coming to be both liberal in theology and non-sectarian in spirit. He apparently looked for the sudden unfolding of a consciousness, in the national mind at large, of one religious life shared in such a spirit; and the duty of the hour seemed to him to be the preparation for its coming. The great World's Parliament of 1893 has been sometimes spoken of as the realizing of that dream. The religion that should thus come to pass would not take the name "Unitarian," which properly signifies an opinion, not a faith. It would probably exist under many names and forms; but its life would be in harmony

with that faith as he conceived it, not sectarian, not denominational. The organized form would be needed for practical service only: it should not signify, not even suggest, a creed. His own opinion, however devoutly held, was as little the test of such an order of faith as any other man's opinion. For himself, he was an eager champion of the Unitarian mode of belief as such. It would, he thought, do more than any other to define the type of a coming American religion. But in holding it his associates should bear in mind that they held it *in trust*, as pledge of some greater thing.

In thinking thus, however, Dr. Bellows clung with great warmth of affection to the spirit, the belief, and even the phrases of the elder piety which had nourished his own life. He never, in fact, lost a certain humility of spirit in the presence or in the memory of his own religious guides, which checked, sometimes (it would seem) capriciously, the great boldness and vigor of his generous self-assertion. His hand is probably to be traced in the wording of those very phrases of the preamble which brought the only discord in the counsels of the time—as if they somehow implied a creed, and so gainsaid his own words in assertion of perfect mental freedom. The preamble reads: "Whereas the great opportunities and demands for Christian labor and consecration at this time increase our sense of the obligations of all disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ to prove their faith" by self-denial and devoted service, "therefore," etc. It was in vain to urge that these words are in their form not a creed, but the statement of a motive; that (as declared in the tenth article) "they are no authoritative test of Unitarianism, and are not intended to exclude from our fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our purposes and practical aims." Danger lurks even in a pre-

amble. To some there seemed a hint of sectarian narrowness in the name "Christian." "May we not," they asked, "consort religiously with freethinkers or with Jews?" To others the words appeared, if not a creed, at least to imply condescension or disparagement towards those "differing from us in belief," tolerating their fellowship rather than frankly greeting it. And thus, while the National Conference proved incomparably the most important consulting body the Unitarians have ever known,—absolutely free in counsel, far more effective than any other agency for harmony and working force,—its first effect was to stir a secession of what might well have proved a most valuable ally.

The issue was fought out at the first adjourned session of the Conference, in what was whimsically called "the battle of Syracuse." The foremost advocate of the offending phrase was James Freeman Clarke, who gave to the words their most generous interpretation, but was equally tenacious of the Christian tradition they express. His early experience of seven years' devoted frontier service in Kentucky, at the beginning of his ministry; his still earlier alliance with the origin of the Transcendental movement, and intimate friendship with its leaders; his fine intelligence, enriched by letters, art, society, and travel; his rare capacity of religious sympathy, which made it his special task and service to illustrate the harmonies of widely varying faiths,—all these might seem to pledge him to the most advanced assertions of intellectual liberty. But his studies of speculative theology had pledged him still more strongly to seek in a transfigured Christian dogmatics the final and absolute statement of religious truth, and to find in its terms the best setting forth of facts objectively real, so that he did not willingly part with any of its phrases. Besides, there showed in

him at times a combative temper—finely exhibited in some recent phases of political debate—with a courage of attack or defense, generally disguised under a kindly courtesy of manner, that bore him promptly to the front in any war of words. In the debate at Syracuse he easily carried the overwhelming assent of the audience he addressed, already inclined that way. The words of the preamble stood, accordingly, as a manifesto of adhesion to historic Christianity. But, as a counter-manifesto, the "Free Religious Association" came presently into being; and the Unitarian body lost, for the time at least, the support that would have been given it by the great moral and intellectual force represented (among those no longer living) in the wayward, versatile, and delightful fancy and the fine religious and poetic genius of John Weiss (1818-79), or in the grave yet glowing and intense ethical spirit of David Atwood Wasson (1823-87).

Meanwhile, the former doctrinal issues had been completely overshadowed and dwarfed by the one great tragedy of the Civil War. They were, in parliamentary phrase, "laid upon the table," and they have never been taken from it since. It appears to be impossible for a later generation to understand how grave those issues were once supposed to be. "All the battles of theology," Dr. Putnam had once said in his pulpit, "are drawn battles; all its questions are open questions." With his customary vigor he had once maintained the argument of the "Supernaturalist" party; but before his death he surprised his congregation by assuring them that that argument did not touch the substance of Christianity. The mental change thus brought about in one of the most conservative minds of the body was mainly due to two causes. One was the order of scientific thought that came in with the study of Darwin and Spencer, by which

he, with all intelligent persons, had been strongly attracted. The other was the working out of a vein of religious philosophy which may be traced, in part, to the influence or the survival of Transcendentalism. To interpret and assimilate that philosophy made now the special task of the intellectual leaders in the Unitarian movement, of whom Dr. Hedge was conspicuously the chief. His volume entitled "Reason in Religion" was by far the ablest and most influential expression of the order of thought here indicated. It was, in fact, to many minds a guide-book of the process by which dogma passes through metaphysics on the way to become pure symbol of a truth of mental experience.

Frederic Henry Hedge (1805-90) had the singular advantage, for those days, of a school training as a boy in Germany, so that the German idiom, in thought as well as speech, was to him a second mother-tongue. With high rank as a general scholar, he was widely familiar with the literature of metaphysics. He was master of a grave and studied eloquence, with a diction, at times, of rare poetic beauty. A faithful and laborious service of thirty-six years in his profession had put him as an intellectual leader as clearly at the head of the liberal pulpit in America as his illustrious contemporary James Martineau stood in England. He had been educated in a period when rhetorical form counted greatly more than now towards a writer's general eminence,—a period when all the best intellectual work among us was shaped by the exigencies of popular speech rather than by the severe logic of the schools; when even grave chapters of history, theology, or metaphysics¹ became a series of effective popular addresses, rather than steps in a methodical essay. The argument of "Reason in Religion" is contained in a

¹ For example, in Dr. Walker's magnificent Lowell Lectures of 1842.

sequence of discourses, each rounded and complete in itself; and thus it develops a single order of thought with culminating effect, but with little of logical coherence. It may be contended, indeed, that the argument was the more readily grasped by those to whom it was addressed, and so was the more effective, because delivered in this form; because, too, it was here and there cast in phrases that stamped themselves on the memory with the pungency and point of epigram. The alternative "Reason or Rome" tells more pithily than a labored paragraph the drift of modern speculation. "Heaven is the sum of ascending spirits, hell the sum of descending spirits," sets forth the law of retribution, as he conceived it, better than many an argumentative essay. "A movement is strong by what it includes, an organism by what it excludes," shows more clearly than a detailed explanation the strength and weakness of the body he served loyally until his death. Almost unconsciously, the tone and method were taken up by a whole generation of inquiring minds, and have become, on the side of pure thought, the most potent factor in determining the quality of later Unitarian doctrine.

The service rendered by Dr. Hedge in this direction was the more effective because rendered in large part through the "Christian Examiner," of which he became editor in 1857. He sought to make of it an independent journal of religion and letters; less than ever, the organ of any one school of theological opinion. Many of the essays just described appeared first in its pages; and the educating work begun in it under his direction was continued in it by other hands. During the war its course was strongly controlled by the turn of public events, when it aimed to interpret or to influence the steps of that moral and political revolution going on under the surface of the struggle, and when political or social ethics were of more

account to us than ecclesiastical life. In the general expansion of mind that followed the war, when the field of action so suddenly widened out before the Unitarian body, the "Examiner" was transferred from Boston to New York; and here, under Dr. Bellows's guidance, it aimed to do the work at once of a denominational organ and of an independent journal, absolutely open and free to the advanced criticism of the day. In this effort it lost the cordial support of one part without securing the full confidence of the other; and, though sustained with fair success as a private enterprise, it was absorbed into the fresh and more popular magazine "Old and New," at the end of 1869.¹

Under the new impulse now given, the Unitarian body widened out on a scale and with a vigor which nothing in its earlier history had led one to look for in it. The yearly fund at the service of the A. U. A. rose at one step from a sum under ten thousand dollars to more than a hundred thousand, under the sagacious counsel of Mr. Henry P. Kidder, and the energetic effort of its president, Dr. Rufus P. Stebbins. From this time on it enjoyed for five years the service of its beloved and devoted secretary, Charles Lowe, who in 1874, a few months before his death, established the "Unitarian Review," to be an ally and interpreter of its work.² Among the first results of this expansion, the policy was adopted of planting outposts at important university towns. This was done first in 1865 at Ann Arbor, Mich., where the State University had gathered a body of students larger than that at any other

¹ A full statement of the circumstances and reasons of this change may be found in the "Unitarian Review" of April, 1887, p. 363.

² The "Unitarian Review" was discontinued at the end of 1891. The next year "The New World" was established as an organ of the higher liberal scholarship, and has been aided by many contributions from foreign writers.

American college. Such outposts now exist in at least twelve different States, making a most serviceable propaganda in a wide field of influence. This effect was especially marked in the case of Ann Arbor, through the exceedingly able courses of class instruction given by Rev. Charles H. Brigham (1820-79), who retired from his charge, broken in health, in 1877. In Wisconsin, also, a rapid and very strong liberal development within the last fifteen years—consecrated now by the bright name of Henry Doty Maxson, who died in 1892—was due to the same wise policy.

In October, 1877, was held in Springfield, Mass., the first session of the "Ministers' Institute," for what would now be called "university extension" in the field of theology. The institute was gathered, by invitation and under the general direction of Dr. Bellows, to do for professional students that part of the work of a religious body most apt to be overlooked under the press of routine work or neglected in its widening missionary enterprises. The term "theology" was taken in its very widest sense, to include all knowledge that bears on the advance of religious thought. The lines followed at this gathering were carefully planned beforehand, marking out the four divisions of the field, to each of which it was at first intended that one full day should be devoted; and a doubt arising on the subject was determined by throwing the doors open to whoever might choose to enter. No discussions have in fact proved more attractive to the outside public than those which it was first thought to reserve for scholars' hearing. The topics were these: 1. The higher criticism (so called) of the Bible, illustrated at this time in studies of the Old Testament after the school of Kuenen; 2. Development of doctrine, as shown in the transition from the Old Testament to the New, and in a criticism of the

- Pauline writings; 3. A discourse on Evolution by Prof. John W. Draper, of New York, supplemented by a paper from Dr. Thomas Hill on Erasmus Darwin, including a critique of certain points in the later Darwinism; 4. Religious and scientific Ethics, especially as applied to social problems. A philosophic essay on "Personality" by Dr. Hedge is included in one of the later volumes of his published writings; and a brilliantly characteristic religious discourse was delivered by Rev. William Henry Channing.

Among the names just mentioned are those of two men, of very marked and peculiar quality, who now for the last time (it is believed) addressed a large representative gathering of their own religious body. William Henry Channing (1810-84) was the preacher of most fervid and purely inspired genius of the bright dawn of Transcendentalism: capable at moments of an eloquence, electric and superb, such as is rarely heard from human lips; a mystic, whose glowing speech seemed often to soar in a range where thought less rapt could scarcely follow, yet in simplicity and sweetness of personal intercourse a child; desiring to walk in humblest ways and do lowliest service, making his New York pulpit a popular platform of human rights and duties, and toiling in the modest task of conducting a cheap journal of Christian socialism; who came home from an admired career in England, that he might serve his country in any open way throughout the war, whether to idealize and consecrate the struggle as chaplain of the House, or minister to the sick and wounded men crowded in the hospitals at Washington, where his own church was the first to be put to that pious use. Thomas Hill (1818-91) was a man conservative in theology and ordinarily reticent of speech, in whom religious humility of spirit and intellectual self-assertion made a combination

very marked; a man of rare versatility in the ranges of accurate science, being a mathematician of high rank, a naturalist widely trained, and a mechanician of extraordinary skill; seeking his companionships among gifted men of science rather than in the ranks of his own profession, to the great loss of younger men in it who ought to have known him better; chiefly eminent in the work of higher education, as president of Antioch College and afterwards of Harvard University.¹

These groups and names show the meaning and intent of the Ministers' Institute at its first founding. The name of Professor Draper, in particular, shows how widely its doors were open to topics and teachers, as well as hearers, quite outside the purely professional and even the Christian field. As later representing faiths not Christian, Rabbi Gottheil, of New York, argued in an extended address at Providence, in 1879, that Jesus was never rejected by his own people, but was the victim of political passion and terror; Protap Chunder Mozoomdar, from Calcutta, speaking for the Brahmo Somaj, illustrated in a most eloquent address at Lowell, in 1883, the mingled good and ill of Christianity as found in British India; Felix Adler, in 1887, from the point of view of ethical culture discoursed with his fine insight on what have been hitherto regarded as phases of "Christian ethics." Thus the Institute, while in one way an offshoot of strictly Unitarian growth, has in its intellectual outlook been quite beyond the range of any denominational interest. It has often heard, or sought to hear, the voice of men from other Christian bodies; and it has always solicited the teaching of science, that knows nothing of party lines in the religious world. Its sessions have generally been held on alternate years with those of

¹ Some of his personal and mental traits are described in the "Unitarian Review" for December, 1891, pp. 463-470.

the National Conference, to which it is in some sense supplementary, but more truly an independent ally.¹

So wide a welcome to great diversities of opinion, with so feeble a restraining power at the center, opened the way, inevitably, to considerable looseness of speculation, and even to a certain lawlessness, inviting scandal, in some men's theory and practice of the religious life. Under such influences, Emerson became a far more potent leader of thought than either Channing or Parker: Emerson, with his brilliant defiance of conventionalism in the treatment of religious topics, but without the austere purity of tone and the profound ethical feeling which in him were the winnowed growth of the finest Puritan ancestry. The phrase "transcendental wild oats," happily employed by Louisa Alcott to describe her recollections of certain rueful experiments at farming in Utopia, might well be applied to much that masqueraded as Christian doctrine, especially in remoter districts, where the restraints of a graver tradition were less observed. These escapades were oftenest innocently meant, and harmless; such effervescence as Kingsley has described in "Yeast." Sometimes, however, they were the token or forewarning of a moral peril; since, in the rapid external spread of Unitarianism (or what called itself such), it would happen that supposed converts from more rigid creeds proved to be irresponsible adventurers, who took the name as a mere cloak of license: such converts, we may fancy, as those whom Paul encountered at Corinth. How to deal with this new symptom, without authority of ecclesiastical discipline, and with nothing of the check that would be given or promised by the simplest external rule of faith, became a

¹ Its meetings were held in 1879 at Providence, in 1881 at Princeton, Mass., in 1883 at Lowell, in 1885 at Newport, in 1887 at Princeton, in 1888 at Worcester, in 1890 at Salem, in 1892 at Newton.

Spring of 1886, in a small pamphlet entitled "The
in the West." The Western Conference, embracing
the whole valley region of the Central States, was
the broadest in extent, and made up of far the most
various and diverse elements, of all the local bodies
with the National Conference. Moreover, there was
a sense of local importance, and a common ground of
sympathy and interest, which (while the National Confer-
ence had no treasury or agencies for separate action)
did not require for the West funds and executive
machinery of its own. Thus the question, as now brought
forward, was limited to that one field. The points it raised
were to be decided by the Western Conference at its annual
meeting, without concert of action in the East. This ses-
sion was held at Cincinnati, in May, 1886.

The solution proposed, when reduced to its simplest
terms, took the form of a resolve, "that the primary ob-
ject of this Conference is to diffuse the knowledge and
promote the interests of pure Christianity." Now, with-
out question, the body of the conference was made up of
Protestants and devout Christians—accepting their own
definition of those terms. But to put the assertion of
this position in the organic act that constituted the con-

human life, would surely, when asserted as dogma, lead to troublesome and distracting definitions, alien to the purpose had in view. The name "Christian" might seem to cast a stigma upon some of their own number, even, of Jewish or other non-Christian antecedents. The proposal was accordingly met by the counter-resolve, adopted by a large majority, that the conference "conditions its fellowship on no dogmatic tests, but welcomes all who wish to join it to help establish truth, righteousness, and love in the world." These two counter-positions, thus narrowly distinguished, define what was known as "the Western Issue." The action at Cincinnati was supplemented the following year, at Chicago, by a pretty extended "statement of things commonly believed among us," which was a generous and eloquent setting forth of a far more full and elevated code of belief than could possibly have been included in the terms of any formal creed. The difference and even alienation occasioned by this act came (as was hoped) to an end in 1892, when it was resolved that the conference "hereby declares it to be its common aim and purpose to promulgate a religion in harmony with the foregoing preamble and statement."

Among the objects effected at the sessions of the National Conference have been the planning and urging of special tasks too large and costly to be properly taken into the lines of current expenditure. These sessions came to be very numerous attended, the formal delegation having been much more than doubled by the friendly throng; and they have been occasions of great social delight as well as religious impression. The spirit of the gathering has responded quickly and warmly to appeals that could have reached general sympathy in no other way; while the lines of action it recommended have been followed up with a generosity which the elder Unitarians

were wont to bestow only on objects outside their own communion. A college, a hospital, a denominational school, or religious enterprise other than Unitarian might look for their bounty, and seldom looked in vain; but they shunned even the appearance of what might be charged against them as working for sectarian ends.¹ Now, however, with some little demur, they gave heed to them of their own household. Costly churches have been built by common effort in Washington, New York, and elsewhere; a Loan Fund of considerable amount aids the same work in a wider field; provision has been made for the divinity schools in Cambridge and Meadville, in sums not varying far from one hundred and fifty thousand dollars each; a still larger amount has been devoted to construct a building ample for denominational or general uses in Boston; help has been given to the straitened churches of Hungary and France, and to the Unitarian College of Transylvania; a missionary work of instruction has been set on foot in Japan, at an annual cost equal to the entire denominational revenue of thirty years ago.

These enterprises have felt the check, doubtless, of old prejudice and of a prudence sometimes anxious; but they have been far less embarrassed by theological differences or mutual distrust than might be feared. The last, in particular, was a new departure into a field doubtful and unexplored. A fund of moderate amount given for such use had for nearly thirty years maintained a single missionary, Rev. Charles H. A. Dall, in Calcutta, where his fine scholarship and devoted service, till his death, in 1886, were of no effect to gather a native church, but were spent in greatly needed tasks of primary instruction, made after-

¹ "Unitarians have given millions to colleges, academies, libraries, philanthropic and charitable institutions, from whom it would have been impossible to draw a single dollar for the Association."—G. E. Ellis, "A Half-Century of the Unitarian Controversy," Introduction, p. xiv.

wards needless (it was thought) by the improved government schools. In 1887 Hon. Horace Davis, of San Francisco (afterwards president of the University of California), was strongly impressed, during a stay of some months in eastern Asia, by the seeming ineffectiveness of Christian missions founded on dogma, and by the apparent openness of the native mind to influences which, without dogmatism or controversy, should convey the purely ethical and spiritual teachings of Christianity. In these he saw the opportunity and duty of the Unitarian body, which had so completely outgrown the controversial stage of religious thought. Chiefly through his urgency, by public address or written appeal,¹ the matter first gained hearing. The effort which followed had from the beginning the cordial welcome of those whom it addressed. Within six months the Japanese public read in its native speech, diffused through its own newspapers of widest circulation, the exposition, argument, or appeal addressed to it by aid of young students who had had their college training in America. After two years' trial the enterprise was expanded to a college of theology and moral science, having at the present time six instructors—three being native, three sustained from the United States—besides the friendly coöperation of liberal scholars from Germany, and of others from faiths not Unitarian. The college is just now (1893) seeking aid to build a permanent structure for its educational work, that which it occupied having been destroyed in a conflagration at Tokio.

Except for the new denominational building, the largest sum raised among Unitarians for a single object has been an endowment fund of something over \$140,000, completed in 1878, for the Harvard Divinity School. The school, though hitherto held and controlled as well as

¹ See, in particular, the "Unitarian Review" for November, 1887.

wholly sustained by them, was at once declared undenominational, to conform with the general policy of the university. Both instructors and students hold their connection with it quite independent of any theological antecedents or tests. Such differences are lost, or overlooked, in the common study of "a scientific theology." This term includes the higher (or historic) criticism of the Bible, the comparative study of religions, intellectual philosophy, and scientific ethics, together with such allied courses of instruction as other departments of the university may offer. The school is understood to be especially strong in Oriental learning (including Hebrew, Arabic, and Assyrian), and in the study of religious or philosophical systems of the East. Among its students are nearly always found several natives of Japan, with a considerable number of graduates from other schools of theology. The "regular" members of the last entering class (1893) number twenty.

The university has thus amply atoned for whatever injustice may have been done, in its name, in the early years of the century. Further, in keeping with this reconstruction of the Divinity School, the College Church, established under President Kirkland and necessarily Unitarian in its affiliations, was discontinued in the summer of 1882. In its place a system of religious instruction was now devised, and has been carried out with signal success, in which the ordinary religious exercises, of both Sundays and week-days, are conducted by preachers of high standing chosen each year from at least three of the leading Protestant bodies; while Jew, Catholic, and Hindoo have been invited on special occasions to address, and have addressed, the students in Appleton Chapel. It is by their own ecclesiastical rule that Catholic preachers are debarred from taking their place with others, as solicited, in the ordinary exercises of the college pulpit.

Contemporary with the changes now recorded, the Unitarian body has experienced the loss, within the past twenty years or a little more, of almost all its well-known leaders who had survived from the earlier period. Dr. Gannett, long its most devoted champion, and one of the most eloquent of its preachers, perished in a railroad disaster at Revere in 1871. President Walker, its weightiest logician and strongest teacher of ethics, died, at the age of eighty, in 1874; Dr. Putnam, its preacher of most brilliant and sustained local reputation, in 1877, at seventy years. Dr. Bellows, its most sagacious organizer, its best beloved leader, and its most distinguished representative before the larger public, died at sixty-eight; Dr. Dewey, perhaps its profoundest religious genius, and the eloquent Nestor of its pulpit, at eighty-eight; ~~with~~ ^{also} Ralph Waldo Emerson, in his eightieth year, whose great and unique fame in a wider field had never made him a stranger to his early associates—these three in 1882. Dr. Stebbins, to whose courage and zeal were due, more than to any other, its wider propagation in the West, died in 1886; Dr. Eliot, who as its first and noblest missionary carried out its pioneer work on a grand scale in the Mississippi Valley, in 1887; James Freeman Clarke, through whom its gospel had a broader and kindlier reception in the popular heart than through any other, in 1888; Dr. Hedge, eminently chief among those who led it towards the larger intellectual interpretation of its word, in 1890; Prof. Andrew P. Peabody, who more than any other made its religious spirit to be felt and welcomed in the broad circle of other Christian bodies, in 1893, at eighty-two, from the effect of accident. Among its elder teachers, Dr. Furness alone remains, in his ninety-second year, the lifelong friend of Emerson and Hedge, whose heart is too young and his spirit too joyous to admit any of the sad epithets of age,

olds the field.

at present organized, the Unitarian body is represented, first, by its larger central agencies, the American Unitarian Association (now a corporate body controlled by delegates from the churches) and the National Conference meeting at stated intervals for counsel and communion; by twenty-five local conferences, made up of delegates representing groups of churches, and meeting only several times in the year (three of these are on the Pacific Coast, and one covers the extensive field of the Southern States); by five "Alliances," or other bodies for Christian work, organized and controlled by women; by twenty-two organizations formed for various special objects, local or general, under the names of "club," "guild," "association," or the like, besides those professional or institutional. These all illustrate, in various ways, the change that has come to pass since the time when Unitarianism meant what was merely theological, professional or controversial.

This change has brought it at least to attempt the practical of a religion wholly free of ecclesiasticism or dogma; to form an alliance with every form of modern thought or action; to be open to criticism or to instruction from every

that of accepting, as sooner or later it must come to do understandingly, whatever may be meant in the purely scientific phrase "positive religion," as opposed to that which is doctrinal or institutional. As one of its interpreters has said, "We have walked out into the open daylight, and for us there is no going back."

The name "Unitarian" may not seem adequate to cover so large a range and variety of opinion as is here implied. It was accepted reluctantly and under strong protest by those who led in the religious movement it denotes, who wished to be known as belonging, individually, to the "liberal wing" of New England Congregationalism. Many would greatly prefer that now. Especially the name has been held unfit to be taken as a *corporate* name, to describe a church, or the larger communion made up of many churches. In fact, of the four hundred and forty-four churches on the list in 1893, less than two hundred (197) are known by that name in their proper title. On its roll of five hundred and ten ministers (of whom twenty are women) more than one hundred were educated in other forms of belief, and may not be presumed familiar with the Unitarian tradition, or any way attached to it. What leads them to accept the name is the same reason that prevailed over the objections felt at first: not at all that it defines an opinion in which they are all agreed, but that it denotes that very undefined and expanding movement of religious thought, which can be interpreted only by a proper understanding of its history and antecedents.

One chief value of the name at the present day is that it serves as a symbol, or standard, recognized by a far wider range of peoples, dialects, and minds than the scant showing of its organized forces might seem to promise. Under the same title, and under like general conditions, are gath-

ered nearly three hundred and fifty (344) congregations in the British Islands. These are well understood to represent, in the main, that same non-dogmatic form of Christianity towards which the movement we have traced has been gradually led. What has been said of the Harvard Divinity School may be said in almost the same terms of Manchester New College, their chief seat of instruction, now established at Oxford, which has been made illustrious in the past by the names of Kenrick, Tayler, and Martineau, and now embraces the freshest European and Oriental learning. Two points are especially noticeable in defining their present position: a tenacious loyalty to the best traditions of English Unitarian Dissent, and a keen sympathy with that tendency in politics which aims at public education, justice, and a better social order. Under special embarrassments, their church life has been comparatively cramped and feeble; but in the wider field they have been honorably known as a positive force in the intellectual and moral sphere.

In France about ~~one~~ ^{one} fifth of the Protestant body are well recognized as Unitarian, though not formally separated from the rest, and without break of the historic continuity that links them with old heroic memories of the Reformation.¹ Their two theological colleges, in Paris and at Nîmes, with a humble but very devout community in the Landes near Bordeaux, testify to their learning and their piety. Prof. Bonet-Maury enumerates, as chief features in their work: (1) the faculty of Liberal Theology established at Paris in 1877 (to take the place of that at

¹ The Rev. Athanase Coquerel (*Nîmes*) spoke of himself to me, in 1855, as legitimate successor of the Huguenot leaders of the sixteenth century. The orthodox majority is large and dominant; but dissenters from its creed have never lost their place or standing in the body. See an article by Rev. Narcisse Cyr on "The Reformed Churches of France," in the "Unitarian Review" for June, 1889, p. 518.

Strasburg), which "has remained faithful to the liberal principles of its Alsatian mother, has constantly refused to subscribe to the synod of 1872, and still preserves for its pupils the independence of their opinions"; (2) a religious section, under Albert Réville, in the "École pratique des hautes études," which includes Catholic, Jew, and Buddhist along with Protestant Christians; (3) a liberal Press, whose most significant product is the great Bible commentary of Edouard Reuss, in twelve volumes, "a colossal monument dedicated to the literary, moral, and religious worth of the Scriptures"; (4) a lay organization, or standing board, directed by leading jurists, which "has since 1872 supported the poorer and feebler churches in the departments, and sheltered them from the encroachments and illegal attempts of the orthodox majority"; (5) representative conferences held at Paris, Nîmes, or Montauban, which have secured important advantages to the liberal minority, especially—by the division of Paris into eight ecclesiastical districts—control of the "Oratoire," the chief Protestant church of France. The names of M. Waddington and Jules Ferry are cited among the statesmen who have shown an active interest in the founding of institutes for free religious education.

Among other Continental nations the following evidences may be given. The late Professor Chastel, of Geneva, author of the most considerable church history composed from the Unitarian point of view, was a venerable witness how far that ancient city had departed from its older tradition and gone over to the liberal name and faith. In northern Italy an active Unitarian propaganda has for many years been conducted by Professor Ferdinando Bracciforti, of the Polytechnic college in Milan, and has had friendly recognition from the royal family. The long-established Unitarian community in Transylvania still

exists, as one of the important educational and religious forces of eastern Hungary. In Germany the latitude of speculation admitted by the official Lutheranism gives less emphasis to the name; but several theologians of eminence have both maintained cordial personal relations with Unitarian scholars in America, and have shared as collaborators in their later work. The Dutch school of biblical criticism, so well represented in Leyden by the late Professor Kuenen, may be said to be fully naturalized in their later teaching; while a large part of the theological erudition or speculation current in Continental schools would in England or America be described simply as Unitarian.

What effect this widening and diversifying of the associations belonging to that name may have on the work or fortunes of the body that has borne it for the last eighty years in America, it would be idle to conjecture. As many disclaimed it in the beginning, so there are those who think it is already outgrown and should be set aside. That point it would be futile to argue here. A different view, and probably the prevailing view, is that summed up in the following words of the most genial interpreter of some later passages in the movement that has here been traced: "The new Unitarianism is neither sentimental nor transcendental nor traditional. It calls itself Unitarian simply because that name suggests freedom and breadth and progress and elasticity and joy. Another name might do as well, perhaps be more accurately descriptive. But no other would be so impressive, or on the whole so honorable."¹

¹ O. B. Frothingham, "Boston Unitarianism," p. 267.

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTE.

The following letter, here inserted by permission of Dr. Martineau, was written to accompany some marginal suggestions on pages 149-168, which have been adopted in the revision of the plates. It constitutes an independent chapter, or commentary, of special importance to the understanding of the period there included.

35 GORDON SQUARE, LONDON, W. C.,
January 13, 1894.

Dear Dr. Allen: I have read your proof-sheet with the greatest interest, and return it with a few marginal notes, indicating the only points at which, as it appears to me, the mode of statement admits of somewhat more precision. These refer to matters of detail, and will, I trust, sufficiently explain themselves.

I am struck, however, with a difficulty which you have to encounter in prefixing to an "*American Church History*," which is fairly concurrent with American history of *Doctrine*, an account of our English history of the corresponding Doctrinal development, which ran its course, as its literature shows (witness Locke, Clarke, Whiston, Firmin, Penn, Emlyn), *on several ecclesiastical lines, and never gathered itself up into an organized church at all.* Prior to the date (Lindsey's change) from which you start, the Unitarian theology had its chief home in our English Presbyterian congregations of Baxterian descent and in the Dublin and Munster Presbyteries, because their fundamental principle of Christian fellowship was devotion to the service of God, in the spirit of Christ, unconditioned by any pledge, actual or tacit, limiting the varieties or checking the development of theological opinion. This utter repudiation of *any* "orthodoxy" as affecting the disciples' peace with God threw the whole emphasis of the fellow-worshippers' union on righteousness of life and the graces of the Christian mind, and rendered possible the coexistence of many shades of doctrinal thought within one communion.

This feature of doctrinal catholicity rendered the congregations which it characterized very attractive to Protestant exiles from France, Geneva, and Holland, who had suffered from the rigor of Calvinistic tests at home. It drew them especially to Dublin, where there had been nothing to hinder the continuance of the Presbyterian order of church government; whereas in England this order, after being suspended for a generation—between the Act

of Uniformity (1662) and that of Toleration (1689)—as illegal, was unable to reconstitute itself, and left the name "*Presbyterian*" without any living significance. Hence it is in Dublin and Munster alone that, through the influx of Huguenots, Remonstrants and Swiss, who had no love for tests, a *real Presbyterian Church Order* constituted itself and remained to our times (I myself received ordination from it), with absolute freedom from engagement to prescribed theological doctrine. The Irish Nonconformists were in a better position than the English for giving effect to their need and claim of religious liberty; for the English Toleration Act of 1689 still required from them subscription to "*the doctrinal articles* of the Church of England";¹ and only so far as they managed to evade this in practice (which they extensively did) had their conscience as teachers free play. The *Irish* Act of Toleration followed later (I think in 1719); and when the draft of it was laid before George I. by his ministers, the king, on coming to the clause requiring this subscription, ran his pen through it, and said, "You do not know what you would be at: they shall have their toleration without subscription." And in this form the act was passed. To the Southern Presbyterians this exemption was altogether congenial. But the Northerners of the Synod of Ulster, having brought over with them all their Scotch habitudes and standards, maintained ecclesiastically the dogmatic restrictions from which they were released legally; and the more progressive spirits among them, who were restive under the restraint, could emancipate themselves only by secession. Hence the schism which first broke off, early in the last century, the nonsubscribing "*Presbytery of Antrim*," and the larger schism which, in 1834, created the "*Remonstrant Synod of Ulster*," in both of which, as in Munster, Arianism and Humanitarianism found acceptance and repose, in fellowship with Trinitarianism.

This relegation of systematic theology to the *Schools*, and concentration of the *Church* on the Christian graces and life of holiness possible under all theories alike, was the characteristic principle of fellowship in our churches here for more than a century before your opening date;² during the whole of which Unitarians and Trinitarians found it possible to worship together. The dissensions which broke out among the dogmatic churches, beginning with the Church of England, doubtless made this catholic neutralism towards doctrine more and more difficult to maintain; and many a time worthy neighbors, hitherto accustomed to "go up to the house of God in company," would be persuaded to look askance at each other as "heretic" and "idolater." In the case of a creed-bound church, such as that to which Lindsey was pledged, the severance was plainly necessary; and the house of refuge created for him in Essex Street was naturally dedicated to the particular type of theology which had suffered exile in his person. This gave it its essence and its name, and intimated to every Trinitarian that its invitation was not meant for him. It is not wonderful that the example of the first *Unitarian* church was followed, as you relate, by a gradual extension of the name to congregations

¹ See p. 148.

² Referring to the opening paragraph on p. 149.—Ed.

historically open to doctrinal variety; for had not the world scorned such catholicity, and driven its heretics into their sanctuaries *alone*? What could they do but accept their expulsion, and set up a separate worship in which others were not asked to join? You truly say that they yielded to this temptation, and that, within a few years of Lindsey's death, the old Baxterian congregations, deserted by their Trinitarian elements through the sharpened controversies of the times, and tired of their unmeaning "Presbyterian" name, were caught by the Essex Street example and allowed their inherited house of God, in forgetfulness of its parentage, to be stamped with the name of their own personal opinions. True, that is the beginning of the *Unitarianized* life of our churches. But, instead of being a development out of their original principle, it is a direct contradiction of it and apostasy from it; such a shifting of their center of gravity as to make their new doctrinal essence affirm exactly what their old catholic essence denied. I cannot, therefore, but look on all that follows on your initial date as not our proper church history, but as an aberration from it.

Instead of troubling you with more words on this matter, I inclose a short paper which will perhaps better enable you to seize my meaning, and to understand my lifelong refusal ever to join, as member or minister, a *Unitarian Church*. A *Unitarian Society*, of individuals interested in vindicating the theological opinions held by them in common, I approve and gladly support, so long as it limits itself to the exposition of opinion, and refrains from all ecclesiastical function or pretension to represent churches. Harmony in the moral and affectional relations of the human spirit and the Divine (and *this* it is the object of a *church* to secure) is possible to all degrees of intelligence and all stages of culture, and ought never to be represented as conditional on finally true opinion. But this is no hindrance to an educational zeal for helping forward, by other agencies, the growth of larger thought and clearer insight.

To me, therefore, it seems that you take up our history just at the point when we surrendered our birthright, and, quitting the ground of spiritual religion, were caught up into the competition of "orthodoxies" and were content to meet all opponents with the assertion that our orthodoxy was better than theirs. This is not the gospel which it was given us to preach; and any future it may have in it belongs, I fear, merely to the history of intellectual opinion without any quickening contact with our organized religious life. . . .

I pray you to pardon this tedious letter. It is written under medical prohibition of all use of the pen, during recovery from an attack of illness which has confined me to my room for the last ten or twelve days. I ventured to disobey; and though *you* are the worse for it, I am not. I have no space left to thank you for your letter, and to reciprocate its kind wishes. Believe me, always,

Yours most cordially,

JAMES MARTINEAU.



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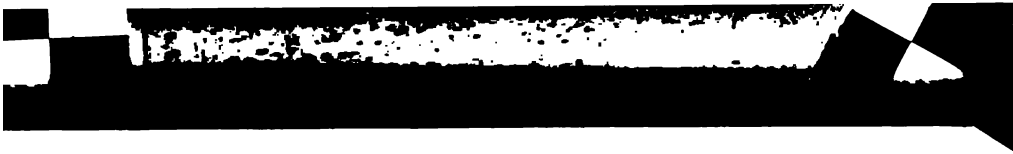
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